

Legislation Text

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Declaring March 31, 2022 as International Transgender Day of Visibility in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, We celebrate the existence of transgender, non-binary, and gender expansive people. We value their resilience, their vibrancy, and their ability to push society further towards inclusion for everyone, and denounce growing efforts to criminalize their existence and care, and to limit their flourishing; and

WHEREAS, International Transgender Day of Visibility takes place annually on March 31st to celebrate transgender and non-binary people and raise awareness of discrimination and oppression faced by trans people worldwide; and

WHEREAS, We recognize that visibility alone is not enough. Until we have true justice and equity for transgender and non-binary people, visibility will always carry some risk and may not be possible for all. Recent advances in equity and visibility won by transgender and non-binary advocates include: federal recognition of the Transgender Day of Visibility; expansion of non-discrimination protections for transgender Americans in housing, healthcare, credit and lending, and education; and increasing visibility of transgender people in critical leadership roles. Still far too many transgender and non-binary people, in particular trans women of color, continue to face profound threats to their safety and well-being; and

WHEREAS, Civil rights victories won by trans activists have expanded judicial recognition of constitutional protections for gender identity and expression, and provided a greater number of people with the basic protections needed to ensure human dignity and self-determination. However, these rights are still not universally guaranteed and are currently under profound threat; and

WHEREAS, There is a growing and dangerous nationwide effort to not only reverse important civil rights for transgender and non-binary people, but to fundamentally attack and eradicate transgender youth and transgender lives. States including Texas, Florida, Arizona, Alabama, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Idaho are seeking to ban or criminalize gender-affirming healthcare and other lifesaving supports. Hundreds of bills have been introduced in dozens of states to limit the rights of transgender and non-binary people, especially youth. In this climate, transgender visibility can carry the risk of devastating consequences, including fear of state separation of children from loving families. These invidious attacks on trans lives have also resulted in powerful resistance, support, and solidarity, especially amongst trans youth communities and organizations who have courageously led the fight against these efforts; and

WHEREAS, At least six transgender people have already been killed this year, each of them an irreplaceable loss: Amariy Lej, 20; Duval Princess, 24; Cypress Ramos, 21; Naomie Skinner, 25; Matthew Angelo Spampinato, 21; and Paloma Vazquez, 29. And in Philadelphia, we remember transgender community members who have been killed, including Dominique "Rem'mie" Fells, 27; Mia Green, 29; Stacey Blahnik, 31; Nizah Morris, 47; Diamond Williams, 31; Kyra Kruz, 27; London Kiki Chanel, 21; Maya Young, 25; Shantee Tucker, 30; Keisha Jenkins, 22; Tanya Moore, 31; Tina Rodriguez, 27; and Michelle "Tameka" Washington, 40. They are still loved; and

WHEREAS, Many transgender people are killed and not honored because the media misreports their identities. For each transgender person killed or lost this year and in years past, we mourn them, we honor them, and we re-commit to fighting for them, even when we do not know their names; and

WHEREAS, Numerous organizations and movements, including the #MeToo movement founded by Tarana Burke and the National Center for Transgender Equality, recognize that transgender, non-binary, and gender expansive people face severe and disproportionate rates of violence and discrimination, including in accessing housing, healthcare, and other supports; and

WHEREAS, In the face of these hardships, transgender people continue to inspire the world with their very survival, as well as with their manifold achievements and their powerful spirit; Tremendous trans community members and leaders from Philadelphia including Elizabeth Coffey Williams, Lia Thomas, Valentina Rosario, Kendall Stephens, Jaci Adams, Henry Sias, Deja Alvarez, Dawn Munro, Kathleen Padilla, Sharron Cooks, Charlene Arcila, Naiymah Sanchez, and Hazel Edwards, serve as role models and inspirations to every community. And across the Commonwealth, transgender leaders continue to lead in groundbreaking ways, including Dr. Rachel Levine, the first trans person to be confirmed for a role by the United States Senate; and

WHEREAS, We celebrate everything transgender people have accomplished throughout history, and we recognize that transgender people have contributed and continue to contribute to the betterment of our society and our City. In particular, trans women of color including Sylvia Rivera, Miss Major, and Marsha P. Johnson were instrumental in the fight against all forms of oppression, participating in the 1965 Dewey lunch counter protests in Philadelphia, the formation of STAR, and the 1969 Stonewall Riots; and

WHEREAS, We recognize and celebrate the work of trans advocacy groups, which continues the fight for dignity and equal rights for members of the trans community. These efforts are building inclusive and healing spaces, and protecting and defending those who are most vulnerable, including disabled folks and people in prison; and

WHEREAS, As we grieve the loss of transgender elders and celebrate and remember everything they have given us, we are excited for the next generation of transgender youth to take charge, to push us all to be and do better, to survive and thrive, to outgrow the wisdom of this generation and create their own; and

WHEREAS, Transgender people deserve joy and abundance, and are worth defending, celebrating, and uplifting at all times; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, we are steadfast in affirming our commitment to uphold our municipal laws prohibiting discrimination based on gender identity in housing, employment, and public accommodations, and our intention to implement additional protections for transgender and non-binary young people that were recently passed into law; and

WHEREAS, We believe in the inherent value of each and every person, including our transgender, non-binary, and gender expansive community members, without exception; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Declares March 31, 2022 as International Transgender Day of Visibility in the City of Philadelphia.