

## Legislation Text

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Recognizing and Celebrating Women Organized Against Rape (“WOAR”) and Its Newest Prevention Education Initiative, “Safe Bars Philly” in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, WOAR is a non-profit organization located in Philadelphia, whose mission is to eliminate all forms of sexual violence through specialized treatment services, comprehensive prevention education programs, and advocacy for the rights of victims of sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, Founded in 1971 and incorporated in 1973, WOAR is Philadelphia’s only rape crisis center and one of the first in the nation. Over the years the organization has grown from a group of volunteers working in a small room of a hospital to an organization that touches individuals across the City; and

WHEREAS, WOAR incorporates bystander intervention as one of its most effective ways that individuals and communities can play a role in ending sexual violence. WOAR hosts many trainings in schools, on college campuses, and in professional settings, and empower individuals to recognize their potential and responsibility as active bystanders to intervene when they encounter unsafe situations. WOAR also facilitates discussions on the realities of drug-facilitated sexual violence, and the fact that alcohol plays a role in 50% of reported sexual assault cases; and

WHEREAS, WOAR’s newest prevention education initiative, “Safe Bars Philly” expands upon already existing prevention efforts and is specifically geared toward environments that are in a unique position to confront alcohol-facilitated sexual violence, our local bars and restaurants; and

WHEREAS, Safe Bars is a sexual assault prevention program that was created by two D.C.-based organizations, “Collective Action for Safe Spaces” and “Defend Yourself”. By developing innovative bystander education strategies, these organizations have impressively trained twenty-seven D.C. bars to identify the warning signs of sexual violence and effectively intervene when they recognize it within their establishments. Safe Bars has received national media recognition from news organizations like NPR, Huffington Post, and Upworthy, highlighted stories of bar staff putting their Safe Bar skills into practice and successfully intervening to support their patrons’ safety. As a result, WOAR invited Safe Bars D.C. to Philadelphia to facilitate an extensive two-day train-the-trainer program. WOAR’s staff learned how to facilitate the interactive Safe Bar curriculum and some best practices for its implementation; and

WHEREAS, In Summer 2017, Education Specialists Leah Dirkse and LaQuisha Anthony trained bartenders from all over the City at Bar Econo Philly, an educational workshop series hosted by Lush Life Productions. The event solidified Philly bartenders’ understanding of the importance of strengthening bystander intervention skills, and began the groundwork for the “Safe Bars Philly” initiative. Since the summer, WOAR has been forming relationships with industry workers and community partners to promote the training at a citywide level. WOAR has successfully launched the “Safe Bars Philly” program and has formally begun training efforts in Philadelphia with partners like Penn Violence Prevention, Lutheran Settlement House’s *MEN CAN* initiative, and the Coalition for Restaurant Safety and Health; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize and celebrate WOAR and its newest prevention education initiative, “Safe Bars Philly” in the City of Philadelphia,

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to WOAR, as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.