

Legislation Text

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Declaring June 2023 LGBTQ+ Pride Month in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The movement for LGBTQ+ liberation has a deep and righteous history in the City of Philadelphia, helmed by revolutionary leaders who demonstrated the power of organizing alongside movements for justice to advance equity and civil rights; and

WHEREAS, On June 11, 1972, thousands of people rallied in Rittenhouse Square and marched through Center City to Independence Hall in Philadelphia's first formal Gay Pride March. Wearing symbolic chains and removing metaphorical masks, some of the marchers dressed in drag and extravagant outfits as they sang "we are proud to say to all today, gay is good and proud and right"; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's early movement for gay rights was led in part by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans youth amidst targeted brutality and harassment toward the LGBTQ+ community by the Philadelphia Police Department; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is home to one of the earliest annual demonstrations for LGBTQ+ rights, the *Annual Reminders*, led by Frank Kameny, Clark Polak, Barbara Gittings, and Kay Lahusen outside Independence Hall on July 4th from 1965 to 1969. Participants included Ernestine Eckstein, Kiyoshi Kuromiya, and Ada Bello. The silent protests enforced strict dress codes and were critiqued for emphasizing conformity to heteronormative societal norms and excluding transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, but have been credited with laying the groundwork for the June 1969 Stonewall protests; and

WHEREAS, The *Annual Reminders* protests evolved into the first LGBTQ+ Pride March in New York City when, at a meeting of the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations in Philadelphia five months following the Stonewall protests, activists passed a resolution to move the time and location of the annual demonstration "in order to be more relevant, reach a greater number of people, and encompass the ideas and ideals of the larger struggle in which we are engaged - that of our fundamental human rights"; and

WHEREAS, During Philadelphia's first Gay Pride March in June 1972, the Philadelphia Gay Pride Committee wrote that "until gay lovers can walk proudly hand in hand on the street without evoking hostile comments and harassment, we will continue to march and fight for our freedom and the freedom of our frightened brothers and sisters who are unhappily satisfied with the status quo;" and

WHEREAS, In the five decades since, Philadelphia has been and continues to be at the vanguard of pathbreaking advances in LGBTQ+ civil rights. Philadelphia activists were at the forefront of the successful campaign to declassify homosexuality as a mental illness in the 1970s, and in 1982 Philadelphia became one of the first cities in the country, and the first in the commonwealth, to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, employment, and public accommodations; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, Philadelphia established one of the first municipal Offices of LGBT Affairs, initially directed by the visionary leader Gloria Casarez. Under Casarez, the City of Philadelphia adopted among the strongest protections for LGBTQ+ communities in the country, including significant expansions for transgender

and gender non-conforming individuals; and

WHEREAS, In June of 2017, the Office of LGBT Affairs unveiled an updated version of the rainbow Pride flag, incorporating Black and Brown to affirm the importance and significance of diversity in LGBTQ+ spaces following powerful community organizing against discrimination and for inclusion; and

WHEREAS, Last week, Rue Landau, the former director of both the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations and the Fair Housing Commission, made history by becoming the first openly LGBTQ+ resident elected as a major party nominee for Philadelphia City Council. Rue Landau has been an active and trailblazing member of Philadelphia's LGBTQ+ community for decades. During the early years of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, Rue Landau was a member of ACT UP, and she and her wife Kerry received Pennsylvania's first same-sex marriage license. This body looks forward to likely having its first openly LGBTQ+ member when it celebrates LGBTQ+ Pride Month next year; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's LGBTQ+ community and history are directly tied to transformative LGBTQ+ resource centers, including the William Way LGBT Community Center, which empowers and serves the city's LGBTQ+ community through "arts & culture, empowerment, and community connections," the Mazzoni Center, a pioneering sexual wellness center that was among the first responders to the HIV pandemic and sponsor of the world-renowned Trans Wellness Conference, GALAEI, a radical social justice organization committed to "empowerment and economic development for all Queer and Trans, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color," and the Attic Youth Center, one of the nation's largest community centers committed to serving LGBTQ+ youth; and

WHEREAS, This year's Pride "Love Light and Liberation" march and festival will be hosted by GALAEI on June 4th, 2023; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia recognizes that visibility without meaningful structural reform is neither sufficient nor enough, and that until equality is fully realized for all members of the community, the fight for LGBTQ+ rights is not over; and

WHEREAS, The fight for equality for all LGBTQ+ Philadelphians is intersectional and deeply connected to movements for racial justice. Racism and the erasure of experiences from queer people of color persist to this day, and the inclusion of these perspectives must be prioritized and centered in celebrations of LGBTQ+ pride; and

WHEREAS, The need to stand in defense of LGBTQ+ lives remains increasingly critical, particularly in light of hateful legislation introduced to restrict healthcare and autonomy from Trans youth and seeks to erase LGBTQ+ experiences from classrooms and curricula; and

WHEREAS, Pride is a space for righteous joy and for the LGBTQ+ community to express and explore the fullness of their identities. Therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA declares June 2023 LGBTQ+ Pride Month in the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That engrossed copies be presented to GALAEI and Rue Landau as a token of this body's respect and admiration.

