

Legislation Text

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Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, one of the worst workplace disasters in U.S. history, and a pivotal moment in U.S. labor history that helped shape awareness about the rights of working people and which spurred landmark worker protection legislation and reforms.

WHEREAS, On March 25, 1911, a fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, located near Washington Square in Manhattan, killed 146 workers who could not escape because the doors were locked-to prevent theft, the employers said, and to keep out union organizers from the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Most workers were young women and recent immigrants; and

WHEREAS, The fire became a rallying cry for the labor movement, resulting in changes in labor law and fire safety regulations that continue to protect all of us today; and

WHEREAS, In 2011, 100 years later, the garment industry again operates like the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. Sweatshop conditions are the norm worldwide, and in countries like Bangladesh garment workers are even killed in fires when they are locked in and unable to escape-just like in the Triangle fire; and

WHEREAS, In the United States, laws and protections won in the aftermath of the fire are under renewed attack including unions' right to collectively bargain; and

WHEREAS, The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire is the subject of a documentary, "*Triangle: Remembering the Fire*," which will first air on HBO on March 21, 2011; and

WHEREAS, We must rededicate our efforts and energy to preserve and protect the rights of working people everywhere so that the tragedy of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire and the memory of those who perished there should not be in vain; now therefore,

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby commemorates the 100th Anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, one of the worst workplace disasters in U.S. history, and a pivotal moment in U.S. labor history that helped shape awareness about the rights of working people and which spurred landmark worker protection legislation and reforms.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented at the Philadelphia commemoration of this tragic event, taking place at the National Museum of American Jewish History as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.