

## Legislation Text

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Welcoming Gritty, the new mascot of the Philadelphia Flyers, and honoring the spirit and passion that Gritty has brought to the City of Philadelphia and to the entire country, both on and off the ice.

WHEREAS, Gritty was introduced to an unprepared world as the Philadelphia Flyers' new mascot on September 24, 2018, but his true age and origins remain cloaked in obscurity. His official bio merely notes that it was recent construction at the arena that disturbed his secret hideout and forced him to show his face publicly for the first time; and

WHEREAS, Gritty has been described as a 7-foot tall orange hellion, a fuzzy eldritch horror, a ghostly empty-eyed Muppet with a Delco beard, a cross of Snuffleupagus and Oscar the Grouch, a deranged orange lunatic, an acid trip of a mascot, a shaggy orange Wookiee-esque grotesquerie, a non-binary leftist icon, an orange menace, a raging id, and an antihero. He has been characterized as huggable but also potentially insurrectionary, ridiculous, horrifying, unsettling, and absurd; and

WHEREAS, The television host John Oliver opened one of his eponymous HBO shows by stating he would have preferred to spend the entire show on Gritty and now uses him as a symbol of something “hostile, consistently unsettling, temperamentally unpleasant and that screams who the [ . . . ] allowed this to happen”; and

WHEREAS, When Gritty floated from the rafters of the Wells Fargo Center to the tune of Miley Cyrus' “Wrecking Ball” on October 9, 2018, he also floated into our hearts and minds, weaving his googly-eyed stare, maniacal smile, and passion for hockey and hot dogs into our deep subconscious; and

WHEREAS, Gritty's storied arrival into Philadelphia was met with all the expected magnanimity of a City with a reputation for colorful and ardent fans and a creative, if skeptical, media, but as soon as Philadelphians realized non-Philadelphians were also mocking Gritty, we rose immediately to his defense and irrevocably claimed him as our own; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphians have already demonstrated their creative, if occasionally jarring, love for Gritty by putting his inimitable face on protest signs, tip jars, wedding cakes, and tattoos; and

WHEREAS, At the same time that Gritty brings people together, the divisions in our current political and cultural life have rendered Gritty contested territory. Gritty has been widely declared antifa, and was subject to attempted reclamation in the editorial pages of the *Wall Street Journal*. It has been argued that he “conveys the absurdity and struggle of modern life under capitalism” and that he represents a source of joyful comic respite in a time of societal upheaval; and

WHEREAS, A man who inked Gritty's face onto his leg captured the feelings of countless Philadelphians: “At first, I was disgusted. I was like, what the hell is this? Why did you do this? Why is this a thing? It was like an hour after that I fell in love with him”; and

WHEREAS, Gritty's National Hockey League debut, featuring a bottoms-up fall onto the ice, is a metaphor for the vulnerability that each of us face as we, too, skate onto the slippery ice that is life; and

WHEREAS, When the Pittsburgh Penguin took to social media and mocked Gritty for his appearance, Gritty responded, "Sleep with one eye open tonight, bird." Gritty, like our steadfast commitment to justice in the face of adversity, will not be mocked or stopped; and

WHEREAS, As there is a small part of every Philadelphian embedded in the soul of Gritty, he is never alone. Gritty joins a renowned cadre of Philadelphia sports mascot colleagues that will teach him how to keep the spirits of Philadelphia sports fans high despite our inevitable misery. Together, the Phanatic, Franklin the Dog, Swoop, and now Gritty will remind us that even in the face of defeat, Philadelphia is Philadelphia because of the brotherly love, sisterly affection, and monsterly spirit that binds us together in confronting anyone who dares to speak critically of our beloved City; and

WHEREAS, While the initial reaction to Gritty's entry into the public eye was negative, he has persevered and become an icon of hope and resistance. As Flyers COO Shawn Tilger explained after Gritty's unveiling, "Seeing the strong positive reaction of 600 excited young students. . .we know we did the right thing"; and

WHEREAS, Gritty may be a hideous monster, but he is our hideous monster; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Welcomes Gritty, the new mascot of the Philadelphia Flyers, and honors the spirit and passion that Gritty has brought to the City of Philadelphia and to the entire country, both on and off the ice.