

## Legislation Text

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Recognizing and Thanking Philadelphia Native and Former 76er Aaron McKie for His Generous Donation to Build a North Philadelphia Community Center with Philadelphia Youth Basketball.

WHEREAS, Aaron McKie was raised in Philadelphia, spending his childhood in a home near 21st Street and Chew Avenue. His house was in close proximity to the Belfield Recreation Center. McKie says he “Practically lived there when I wasn’t at home or school,” and it kept him out of the trouble that many of his peers encountered in his neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, McKie found a mentor in Bill Ellerbe at Belfield Recreation Center, and he went on to play for Ellerbe at Philadelphia’s Simon Gratz High School. In his senior year, McKie was selected to All-Scholastic and All-Southern Pennsylvania teams. He led his team to a 26-4 record, and Simon Gratz won the Public League championship. McKie graduated in 1990; and

WHEREAS, McKie continued his basketball career in Philadelphia, suiting up for Temple University under legendary coach John Chaney. He was named the 1993 Atlantic 10 Conference Player of the Year, and McKie is currently the sixth-leading scorer in Temple history. McKie graduated from Temple, making him the first person in his family to receive a college degree; and

WHEREAS, McKie was selected by the Portland Trail Blazers in the first round of the 1994 NBA Draft. He enjoyed a 13-season career in the NBA from 1994 to 2007, and Philadelphia welcomed him back for 8 seasons as a 76er. In 2001 the 76ers won the Eastern Conference, and McKie won the NBA’s Sixth Man of the Year Award; and

WHEREAS, As a teammate, McKie played a similar role in the locker room as his mentors had in his childhood. Hall of Famer Allen Iverson, who won the NBA’s Most Valuable Player Award in 2001, said of McKie, “He helped me so much in my career. I talk about the mistakes that I made in my career. I made a million of them, but if it weren’t for Aaron McKie I would have made two million of them. He is just somebody I always listened to and could talk to about anything”; and

WHEREAS, McKie ended his playing career in the NBA and immediately began a basketball coaching career. He spent 6 years as an NBA assistant coach, and he is now an assistant coach at his alma mater, Temple University, under Fran Dunphy; and

WHEREAS, McKie said, “Without places to go, without role models to set a good example, neighborhoods can become war zones and it's too easy for kids to go down the wrong path. I had a few father figures to make sure I didn't end up a statistic and now it's our responsibility to pay it forward.” Aaron McKie is now committed to ensuring that the youth of North Philadelphia have the same opportunities to be mentored and learn the game of basketball that he had; and

WHEREAS, McKie is generously donating to help Philadelphia Youth Basketball (PYB) build a \$25 million, 120,000 square foot community center in North Philadelphia’s Logan neighborhood which is slated to open in

2019. The facility will have eight indoor and eight outdoor basketball courts. A health and wellness wing will feature healthy foods, strength training, and counseling and rehabilitation resources. An education wing will have classrooms, a computer lab, and a library. Most importantly, staff will serve as mentors and role models to the youth who frequent the community center. The center's inclusion of these additional resources shows that basketball is a vehicle to guide youth towards holistically positive life choices; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia has a storied history of basketball excellence, and Aaron McKie is part of that story by making a difference on and off the court. McKie is to be commended for his investment in Philadelphia's youth, encouraging them to live better lives by pursuing the game to which he has devoted his life. Because of his efforts with Philadelphia Youth Basketball, youth will be able to develop their potential in sports and other pursuits; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we recognize and thank Philadelphia native and former 76er Aaron McKie for his generous donation to build a North Philadelphia community center with Philadelphia Youth Basketball.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Aaron McKie, evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.