

## Legislation Text

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Honoring and congratulating activist, advocate, founder and president emerita of the Children's Defense Fund, Marian Wright Edelman.

WHEREAS, Mrs. Edelman served as an advocate for disadvantaged Americans throughout her life. Influenced strongly by her southern upbringing, she found her start in the Civil Rights Movement. Participating in sit-ins, protesting, and continuously fighting against discrimination and racism helped to give birth to the founding of the Children's Defense Fund; and

WHEREAS, Marian Wright Edelman distinguished herself academically as a graduate of Spelman College and Yale Law School. At Spelman she pledged as a member of the Delta Sigma Theta sorority; and

WHEREAS, As the first Black Woman to be admitted to practice as a lawyer in Mississippi, she dedicated the early part of her career to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign, and defending civil liberties of disadvantaged communities facing poverty or discrimination; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Edelman was involved in the founding of the Head Start program, a now nationally recognized program that was a key accomplishment in promoting and supporting school preparedness of children ages birth to five from lower income families; and

WHEREAS, The Children's Defense Fund has consistently challenged the nation to increase expectations and improve policy standards for children. The Children's Defense Fund has focused work on Child Poverty, Child Health, Education, Child Welfare, Early Childhood Development, Youth Justice, and Gun Violence Prevention, and has shown a commitment to improving the lives of many through their decades of hard work and dedication; and

WHEREAS, Marian Wright Edelman has spent the past 47 years of her life working to support the mission of the Children's Defense Fund by ensuring, "every child a Healthy Start, a Head Star, a Fair Start, a Safe Start, and a Moral Start in life and successful passage to adulthood with the help of caring families and communities."; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Edelman has been honored and rewarded with the highest awards such as the Albert Schweitzer Humanitarian prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the Robert F. Kennedy Lifetime Achievement Award; and

WHEREAS, Her motto, "If you don't like the way the world is, you have an obligation to change it. Just do it

one step at a time,” has been lived out in the impact that the Children’s Defense Fund has made during her time as President and CEO; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Edelman will step down and will relinquish her reins to Reverend Dr. Starsky Wilson. Mrs. Edelman will remain President Emerita in the Office of the Founder. She welcomes a generational shift in the leadership of the Children’s Defense Fund to serve as a bridge between the organization’s roots in the Civil Rights Movement and today’s Black Lives Matter Movement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby congratulate and honor Marian Wright Edelman for her 47 years of dedicated service to the children of the United States.

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