



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Celebrating the life and legacy of Rev. Dr. Leon H. Sullivan, “The Lion of Zion,” on the occasion of his 100th Birthday.

WHEREAS, Born on October 16, 1922, Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan was a civil rights and social justice leader who advocated for social and economic equity through job and entrepreneurship training, investment in Black-owned businesses, community and housing development, and much more; and

WHEREAS, In the early 1960s, Reverend Sullivan fought job discrimination by leading more than 400 Black ministers and their congregations in a successful boycott campaign called Selective Patronage, which opened the doors to 4,000 job opportunities for Blacks in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, In 1964, Reverend Sullivan responded to the need for job training by establishing the Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC), first from an abandoned jailhouse in North Philadelphia, then in over 75 cities across 34 states, and globally in 16 African countries, Poland, Belize, Great Britain, and the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, In 1966, as part of his 10-36 Plan, encouraging individuals to invest in the economic future of their communities, he founded the Leon H. Sullivan Charitable Trust and the Progress Investment Associates, through which numerous economic development and social services programs were developed and funded; and

WHEREAS, In 1977, Reverend Sullivan established the Sullivan Principles, a campaign and code of conduct for human rights and equal opportunity for companies operating in apartheid-era South Africa, which would serve as a catalyst for the end of apartheid and White minority rule; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Sullivan envisioned building a bridge between Africa and America, so thus created a broader array of programs such as Teachers for Africa through the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH) in 1988, and through his series of convenings of world and business leaders in his African-African American Summits starting in 1991; and

WHEREAS, In 1999, the United Nations adopted his Global Sullivan Principles, an expansion of his original campaign against apartheid, to further promote corporate social responsibility, global human rights and political, economic, and social justice; and

WHEREAS, In his lifetime, Reverend Sullivan was the recipient of numerous awards including The Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award that the American government can give, by President George H. W. Bush. He was also awarded the Four Freedoms Award by the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute and The Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights by President Bill Clinton; and

WHEREAS, The legacy of Reverend Sullivan is intertwined with the history of Philadelphia, the City will therefore honor Reverend Sullivan’s life and global impact as part of his centennial celebration happening October 2022; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia today announced a calendar of approximately a dozen events happening throughout the month of October that celebrate Reverend Sullivan's local, national, and global legacy. Events include the 38th Annual Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Kick-off Breakfast and Award Ceremony, the Zion Baptist Church Centennial Worship Celebration, the naming of the Rev. Dr. Leon H. Sullivan International Arrivals Hall Event at the Philadelphia International Airport, a day of free Admission to the African American Museum in Philadelphia, and many more; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia City Council today kicks off this centennial celebration with the presentation of this Resolution and the announcement of the Leon H. Sullivan 100th Birthday Celebration Calendar; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia; the Office of Arts, Culture and the Creative Economy; the Leon H. Sullivan Charitable Trust; and Philadelphia International Airport will host the pivotal event of the centennial celebration on October 18, 2022. The event will unveil the newly named Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan International Arrivals Hall and dedicate a permanent exhibit honoring the legacy of Leon Sullivan at the airport; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honors and recognizes Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan's 100th birthday this October and invites all Philadelphians to learn about the incredible impact of this local legend by participating in the City's calendar of centennial celebrations.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to representatives of the Leon Sullivan Trust, as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.