

## Legislation Text

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Recognizing Anne O'Callaghan on her retirement as the Founder and Executive Director of the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians.

WHEREAS, Anne O'Callaghan, a naturalized U.S. Citizen, was born in Ireland and emigrated to America in 1970; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Callaghan has been a prominent advocate for immigrants in the Greater Philadelphia region for nearly 40 years; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Callaghan received her training and certification at the University of Dublin (Trinity College) School of Medicine and the Oswestry and North Staffordshire School of Physiotherapy; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Callaghan was a physical therapy practitioner for twenty years and an instructor at the University of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Callaghan later founded a software development company serving the home health care industry; and

WHEREAS, By 1999, the Philadelphia area was home to a large Irish immigrant population, some of whom needed community assistance in finding work, housing, education, food, and even how to travel back to Ireland if a loved one had died; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Callaghan was well-known in Philadelphia's Irish immigrant community, and respected as a thoughtful person with good reasoning skills and the power of persuasion to find appropriate help; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Callaghan was asked by community leaders to provide informal assistance at an immigration center being opened in Upper Darby to assist this community; and

WHEREAS, Anne O'Callaghan then volunteered her time and lent her skills to assist immigrants of all backgrounds in obtaining the vital information they needed to establish their new American lives; and

WHEREAS, To support this work, Anne O'Callaghan began to use her fundraising and development skills to raise awareness and support among the local philanthropic community for this work; and

WHEREAS, In the course of her volunteer work, she identified a need for the region to have a centralized employment and referral center for immigrants, and invested her own personal resources in the research necessary to design such a center, including traveling to New York, Boston, and other cities that provided services for immigrants; and

WHEREAS, In 2003, Anne O'Callaghan brought together her knowledge and experience to found the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians, to meet immigrants' employment needs and serve to connect

newly arrived individuals from around the world with all manner of economic opportunities through programs such as job skills and language training, job placement, legal services, support for small and startup businesses, and resource referrals; and

WHEREAS, Under the leadership of Anne O’Callaghan the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians grew from one volunteer to a 22-person staff with an annual budget of \$1.5 million that has served more than 8,000 immigrants from 140 countries including placing more than 1,400 work-authorized immigrants in a wide range of positions at 170 area companies; and

WHEREAS, In 2006, Anne O’Callaghan was recognized for her contributions to the immigrant community by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services with their Outstanding American by Choice Award; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, Anne O’Callaghan was presented with the inaugural Mathew Carey Hibernian Award by the Irish Immigration Center in recognition of her continued service to the Irish community and support of the immigrant community in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, In 2011, Anne O’Callaghan was recognized as a Purpose Prize Fellow for her achievements with the Welcoming Center; and

WHEREAS, Anne O’Callaghan has continued to dedicate significant personal, professional, financial and human resources to further the mission and the work of the Welcoming Center; and

WHEREAS, In addition to her work with immigrants, Anne O’Callaghan is active in the Alliance for the Mentally Ill, the Visiting Nurses Association of Greater Philadelphia, and the Southwest Community Enrichment Center; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes Anne O’Callaghan on her retirement as the Founder and Executive Director of the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Anne O’Callaghan, as evidence of the respect and admiration of this legislative body for her dedication to Philadelphia’s newcomers and to helping make Philadelphia a more attractive and welcoming City.

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