

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and celebrating the re-opening of the historic Philip Jaisohn Memorial House on October 10, 2020, which honors the legacy of Philadelphian Philip Jaisohn, a Korean American pioneer for democracy, political and religious freedom, and Korean independence.

WHEREAS, Philip Jaisohn was a Korean intellectual and political activist who worked for Korean independence and sought political exile in the U.S. around 1885. On June 19, 1890, Philip Jaisohn became the first Korean immigrant to acquire United States citizenship; and

WHEREAS, Philip Jaisohn made his home in Media, PA, and established Philadelphia as a central overseas base for supporting Korean independence. The Philip Jaisohn Memorial House, which was his home from 1925 until his death in 1951, will serve as an educational center for visitors worldwide to learn about the history of this Korean American pioneer in democracy, political and religious freedom, equality, journalism, medicine, and more; and

WHEREAS, Philip Jaisohn became the first Korean American to earn a United States medical degree, which was awarded in 1892 by Columbian Medical College (now known as George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences); and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is the birthplace of American independence, and it became the symbol of freedom for other oppressed peoples. Inspired by the First and Second Continental Congress of the United States held in Philadelphia, Philip Jaisohn organized the First Korean Congress in Philadelphia from April 14 to April 16, 1919, along with Syngman Rhee, who would become the first President of the Republic of Korea, and Han Kyong Chung. At this historic event, they introduced the Korean Declaration of Independence. A delegation of 150 Korean representatives and Americans participated in the First Korean Congress, and on the last day they marched in solidarity from the Little Theatre to Independence Hall with support from the City of Philadelphia, where the Korean Declaration of Independence was proclaimed to the world; and

WHEREAS, Philip Jaisohn was a noted champion of the Korean Independence Movement, a respected journalist who had started the first Korean newspaper in Hangul, and established the Korean Information Bureau in April 1919. Following the First Korean Congress event, he published the *Korea Review* to advance causes for political and religious freedom in Korea and throughout Asia; and

WHEREAS, Philip Jaisohn and Rev. Floyd W. Tomkins founded the League of Friends of Korea on May 16, 1919, which grew to 25,000 members across 21 American cities as well as London and Paris to educate the general public as well as community and government leaders about the aspirations of the Korean people for an independent Korean nation; and

WHEREAS, The Philip Jaisohn Memorial House served as the central overseas base for supporting the international Korean independence movement, as well as a home for Philip Jaisohn's renowned medical work including private practice, medical writings and volunteer services for what he considered his second home country, the United States; and

WHEREAS, Korean Americans have since made significant contributions to the economic and cultural vitality of the United States and the world in the fields of government, academia, culture, politics, and business such as medicine, law, journalism, and more; and

WHEREAS, Korean Americans have made history by winning local, state, and federal elections as naturalized citizens and U.S. born citizens throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, On October 10, 2020, people throughout the Borough of Media, Upper Providence Township and the Greater Philadelphia region will come together to celebrate the reopening of the Philip Jaisohn Memorial House as a place open to the public that inspires and unites all people to serve the country we live in as Philip Jaisohn did for the two home countries he loved; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA, Recognizes and celebrates the re-opening of the historic Philip Jaisohn Memorial House on October 10, 2020, which honors the legacy of Philadelphian Philip Jaisohn, a Korean American pioneer for democracy, political and religious freedom, and Korean independence.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation, Inc. in care of George Jungsoo Choe, President and CEO of the Foundation.