



Legislation Text

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Declaring June 2024 LGBTQ+ Pride Month in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The movement for LGBTQ+ liberation has a deep and righteous history in the City of Philadelphia, helmed by revolutionary leaders who demonstrated the power of organizing alongside movements for justice to advance equity and civil rights; and

WHEREAS, On June 11, 1972, thousands of people rallied in Rittenhouse Square and marched through Center City to Independence Hall in Philadelphia's first formal Gay Pride March. Wearing symbolic chains and removing metaphorical masks, some of the marchers dressed in drag and extravagant outfits as they sang "we are proud to say to all today, gay is good and proud and right"; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's early movement for gay rights was led in part by lesbian, gay, bisexual, and Trans youth amidst targeted brutality and harassment toward the LGBTQ+ community by the Philadelphia Police Department; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is home to one of the earliest annual demonstrations for LGBTQ+ rights, the Annual Reminders, led by Frank Kameny, Clark Polak, Barbara Gittings, and Kay Lahusen outside Independence Hall on July 4th from 1965 to 1969. Participants included Ernestine Eckstein, Kiyoshi Kuromiya, and Ada Bello. The silent protests enforced strict dress codes and were critiqued for emphasizing conformity to heteronormative societal norms and excluding Transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, but have been credited with laying the groundwork for the June 1969 Stonewall protests; and

WHEREAS, The Annual Reminders protests evolved into the first LGBTQ+ Pride March in New York City when, at a meeting of the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations in Philadelphia five months following the Stonewall protests, activists passed a resolution to move the time and location of the annual demonstration "in order to be more relevant, reach a greater number of people, and encompass the ideas and ideals of the larger struggle in which we are engaged - that of our fundamental human rights"; and

WHEREAS, During Philadelphia's first Gay Pride March in June 1972, the Philadelphia Gay Pride Committee wrote that "until gay lovers can walk proudly hand in hand on the street without evoking hostile comments and harassment, we will continue to march and fight for our freedom and the freedom of our frightened brothers and sisters who are unhappily satisfied with the status quo;" and

WHEREAS, In the five decades since, Philadelphia has been and continues to be at the vanguard of pathbreaking advances in LGBTQ+ civil rights. Philadelphia activists were at the forefront of the successful campaign to declassify homosexuality as a mental illness in the 1970s, and in 1982 Philadelphia became one of the first cities in the country, and the first in the commonwealth, to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, employment, and public accommodations; and

WHEREAS, Under Mayor John Street, Michael Hinson became Philadelphia's first mayoral-appointed liaison to LGBTQ+ communities, a position that would lay the foundation for the creation of the Mayor's Office of LGBT Affairs. His legacy includes ensuring that gender identity was protected under the City's Fair Practices

Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, In 2008, Philadelphia established one of the first municipal Offices of LGBT Affairs, initially directed by the visionary leader Gloria Casarez. Under her leadership, the City of Philadelphia adopted some of the strongest protections for LGBTQ+ communities in the country, including significant expansions for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals; and

WHEREAS, In June of 2017, the Office of LGBT Affairs unveiled an updated version of the rainbow Pride flag, incorporating Black and Brown to affirm the importance and significance of diversity in LGBTQ+ spaces following powerful community organizing against discrimination and for inclusion; and

WHEREAS, In April 2024, Andre Carroll, a community organizer from Germantown, won his primary election for Philadelphia's 201st legislative district, and is likely to be the district's first openly gay representative following the general election in November. Carroll would be the district's first openly gay representative and one of only a small number of Black LGBTQ+ members in the Pennsylvania Assembly; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's LGBTQ+ community and history are directly tied to transformative LGBTQIA+ resource centers, including the William Way LGBT Community Center, which empowers and serves the city's LGBTQ+ community through "arts & culture, empowerment, and community connections," and the Mazzoni Center, a pioneering sexual wellness center that was among the first responders to the HIV pandemic and sponsor of the world-renowned Trans Wellness Conference; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's LGBTQ+ youth, and most especially Black and Brown LGBTQ+ youth facing discrimination, violence, and marginalization, have a safe and affirming space for support and empowerment, in the Attic Youth Center, one of the nation's largest community centers committed to serving LGBTQ+ youth. The Attic Youth Center provides a wide range of services to LGBTQ+ youth, including life skills, mental health counseling, community engagement and social activities, assistance with finding housing or employment, and a safe space for LGBTQ+ youth to express their identities; and

WHEREAS, This year's Pride 2024 "Be You" march and festival will be hosted on June 2nd, 2024 by GALAEI, a radical social justice organization committed to "empowerment and economic development for all Queer and Trans, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color,;" and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia recognizes that visibility without meaningful structural reform is neither sufficient nor enough, and that until equality is fully realized for all members of the community, the fight for LGBTQ+ rights is not over; and

WHEREAS, The fight for equality for all LGBTQ+ Philadelphians is intersectional and deeply connected to movements for racial justice. Racism and the erasure of experiences from queer people of color persist to this day, and the inclusion of these perspectives must be prioritized and centered in celebrations of LGBTQ+ pride; and

WHEREAS, The need to stand in defense of LGBTQ+ lives remains increasingly critical, particularly in light of hateful legislation introduced to restrict healthcare and autonomy from Trans youth and seeks to erase LGBTQ+ experiences from classrooms and curricula; and

WHEREAS, Pride is a space for righteous joy and for the LGBTQ+ community to express and explore the fullness of their identities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Council of the City of Philadelphia declares June 2024 LGBTQ+ Pride Month in the

City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That Engrossed copies be presented to Andre Carroll and the Attic Youth Center as a token of this body's respect and admiration.