

Legislation Text

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Honoring and Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Kwanzaa, and specifically recognizing the work of the Kwanzaa Cooperative in Philadelphia in keeping the traditions of Kwanzaa alive in our City thus solidifying the cultural significance of Kwanzaa to our citizens and to future generations.

WHEREAS, Kwanzaa is an African-American and Pan-African holiday which celebrates family, community and culture. Celebrated from December 26th through January 1st, its origins are in the first harvest celebrations of Africa from which it takes its name; and

WHEREAS, The name “Kwanzaa” is derived from the Swahili phrase “mutunda ya kwanza,” which means “first fruits.” The “first fruits” celebrations are recorded in African history as far back as Ancient Egypt and Nubia and appear in other African civilizations such as Ashantiland, Yorubaland, Swaziland, and smaller groups like Matabele, Thonga and Lovedu; and

WHEREAS, Kwanzaa was established in America in 1966 during the Black Freedom Movement and thus reflects its concern for cultural grounding in thought and practice, and its associated call for unity and self determination; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Maulana Karenga is recognized as the founder of the celebration. Many different Pan-African Nationalist organizations were responsible for embracing the celebration in its early years and helping to spread it throughout the nation; and

WHEREAS, Kwanzaa builds on the five fundamental “first fruit” celebrations: in gathering, to reaffirm the bonds between them; reverence, for the creator in thanks and respect for blessings, bountifulness and beauty of creation; commemoration, of past pursuits of its ancestors lessons and in honor of their models of human excellence; recommitment, to African cultural ideals in an ongoing effort to always bring forth the best of African cultural thought and practice; and celebration, of the good, the good of life and existence itself, the good of family, community and culture, the good of the awesome and the ordinary and the good of the divine, natural and social; and

WHEREAS, Maisha Sullivan Oongoza is the Chairwoman of the Kwanzaa Cooperative in Philadelphia. The group was established in 1984, and has functioned under a variety of different names since the 1970s; and

WHEREAS, We salute those celebrating Kwanzaa in Philadelphia and globally in the African Diaspora on this 50th Anniversary of Kwanzaa. We recognize the work of the Kwanzaa Cooperative in bringing the founder of Kwanzaa, Dr. Maulana Karenga to Philadelphia each year, and this year on December 29th, and in maintaining this celebration in the City of Philadelphia; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Philadelphia City Council, Hereby honors and celebrates the 50th Anniversary of Kwanzaa, and specifically recognizes the work of the Kwanzaa Cooperative in Philadelphia in keeping the traditions of Kwanzaa alive in our City thus solidifying the cultural significance of Kwanzaa to our citizens and to future generations.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Kwanzaa Cooperative as a sincere expression of the Philadelphia City Council's gratitude and recognition.