

## Legislation Text

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Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Million Women March which inspired African American women across the nation to work for their own improvement as well as that of their communities.

WHEREAS, The March was organized by Philadelphia grassroots activists Phile Chionesu and Asia Coney and envisioned to help bring social, political, and economic change to black communities as well as hope, empowerment, unity and sisterhood to women, men and children of African descent globally regardless of nationality, religion, or economic status; and

WHEREAS, On October 25, 1997 an estimated 500,000 African American women-estimates ranged from 500,000 up to 2.1 million-gathered together to march on the Ben Franklin Parkway in Philadelphia. The women of the March called for repentance for the pain of black women caused by one another and the restoration and resurrection of African American family and community bonds; and

WHEREAS, The March included hours of prayer, music, and inspirational speeches by local community activists to address pressing issues such as the economic deterioration of African American communities, the importance of nurturing young children in a positive environment, finding a collective voice in politics and the civil rights movement, and strengthening black families; and

WHEREAS, Several influential black women attended and spoke including Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, former wife of late South African President Nelson Mandela, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Sista Souljah, Jada Pinkett Smith, Attallah and Ilyasah Shabazz (daughters of Malcolm X), and Dr. Dorothy Height; and

WHEREAS, The March was also intended to draw attention to statistics that highlight the marginalization and inequality of African American women in the United States. According to 2015 U.S. Census data, African American women are three times more likely than white women to be incarcerated, earn only 64 cents to the dollar compared to white men, and have a poverty rate that is 2.5 times higher than white women; and

WHEREAS, The Million Woman March has continued its mission under the direction of the founder and national offices. Since the March, over 50 conferences, 100 forums, online radio broadcasts for 12 years, and many social justice protests for women and African American females have taken place; and

WHEREAS, Two decades hence, the Million Women March continues to influence conversations on what it means to be a woman of African descent in America and how black women can support each other; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the Million Women March which inspired African American women across the nation to work for their own improvement as well as that of their communities.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be provided to Phile Chionesu and Asia Coney, organizers for the Million Women March.

