

Legislation Text

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Honoring and Celebrating the Historic Career of Reverend Louise Williams Bishop, also known as the Queen of the Airwaves, on the Occasion of her Retirement

WHEREAS, Rev. Louise Williams Bishop - dubbed the Queen of the Airwaves - has achieved an incredible degree of personal success in three separate, but related careers - radio, the ministry, and politics. The theme that runs through all her work and music is her desire to bring inspiration and assistance to people in need; and

WHEREAS, Born in Cairo, Georgia, Rev. Bishop moved to Philadelphia as a young child. A graduate of West Philadelphia High School, she earned a degree in communications and radio broadcasting from the American Foundation of Dramatic Arts; and

WHEREAS, Although drawn to the emerging field of television, she began her communications career at WHAT radio, as the youngest voice in radio. She immediately fell in love with radio and the power and responsibility the microphone gave her to communicate with the masses on a daily basis. Moving to WDAS-AM, she hosted "The Louise Bishop Program" for over 49 years. Her program was consistently one of the highest-rated programs at the station and was an institution in the Philadelphia media market. She has used this forum to inform and unite people around social, civic and religious issues; to advocate for services for the poor, including job searches, and to bring the message of political leaders to the people. Bishop was credited with keeping Philadelphia calm following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King in 1968; and

WHEREAS, In 1978, Rev. Bishop was called to the ministry and became an ordained Evangelist by the Pennsylvania Baptist Association. She felt God moving her to minister more than just between records on her gospel program. Having just experienced the hurt and pain of a recent divorce, she felt she could minister to those with the same heartache and sorrow. She has served her ministry with the Message of God's Saving Grace since that time and has preached and taught all over the City as well as conducting revivals all along the East Coast; and

WHEREAS, One Sunday morning in 1987, a blind man whose wife had deserted him and their five young children (three still in diapers) called into Louise's gospel program begging for help. She opened the microphone and asked the people of Philadelphia to respond. Within five minutes the City's Managing Director, as well as scores of people, answered the call. The power of that response led to the beginning of her third career; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing how good God had been to her, she realized she had to do more and made the decision to run for the open state representative seat created by Chaka Fattah's move to Congress. She was first elected to the state House of Representatives in 1988 to serve as a representative in the 192nd District; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Bishop served as the Majority Chair of the Children and Youth Committee and was on a number of committees, including Aging and Older Adult Services; Health and Human Services and Democratic Policy. She was the most senior African American woman serving in the General Assembly, and she was a former officer of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus and the Philadelphia Delegation. Rev. Bishop

sponsored legislation to address a number of critical issues, including domestic violence, day care, mandatory drug treatment, education, health care and Sarcoidosis. She is most proud of the legislation which improves the quality of life for children and older people; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Bishop has received numerous prestigious awards throughout her career, including an Honorary Doctorate of Humanities from Monrovia College, a Doctor of Laws Degree Honoris Causa from Eastern University, "Woman of the Year Award" from Operation Push by Rev. Jessie Jackson, Public Service Citation from the Jewish Center, and "Mother of the Year Award" from Pinn Memorial Baptist Church to name only a few; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Bishop has been a member of Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus, Community College Caucus, the National Political Congress of Black Women, the NAACP, the Advisory Board of Women of Excellence, Inc. in Philadelphia, the National Organization of Women, the National Conference of State Legislators, the STA Human Services Committee of the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the Baptist Minister's Conference; and

WHEREAS, Most recently, you could hear Rev. Bishop on WURD Radio 900 AM/96.1 FM on Sundays for Gospel Times from 6:00am to 11am; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Council of the City of Philadelphia hereby honors and celebrates the historic career of Reverend Louise Williams Bishop, also known as Queen of the Airwaves, on the occasion of her retirement.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this Resolution be presented to Reverend Bishop, further evidencing the sincere respect of this Legislative body.