

Legislation Text

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Recognizing Berisford “BJ” Jones, co-chair of the Philadelphia Police Department LGBTQ Liaison Committee, for his tireless efforts toward improving relations between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

WHEREAS, The work of law enforcement primarily consists of protecting people from harm and arresting people who have broken the law - functions that are difficult to carry out without community trust and buy-in; and

WHEREAS, For well-documented historical reasons, relationships between law enforcement agencies and LGBTQ communities across the country have been strained, lacked mutual trust, and have at times become outwardly hostile; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Police Department LGBTQ Liaison Committee was created to bridge the gap between officers and the communities they serve, by mediating interactions between police and the public, helping to navigate the criminal justice system, and providing sensitivity and cultural competency trainings to officers; and

WHEREAS, Much of the LGBTQ Liaison Committee’s work is undertaken by Berisford “BJ” Jones, who rose from humble beginnings in the Raymond Rosen Projects at Diamond & Sedgley to spend his young adult years as a successful retail management professional for companies like Wawa, Boston Market, 7-Eleven, and The Home Depot, before getting involved with the committee and eventually becoming its co-chair; and

WHEREAS, Working with a combination of North Philadelphia street smarts, the technical competency of a person with a business degree and corporate experience, and the gregariousness that comes from growing up with ten siblings, BJ has confidently and ably guided the LGBTQ Liaison Committee in its work, mission and purpose; and

WHEREAS, In addition to mediating safe interactions between the police and members of the LGBTQ community, whether victims or suspects, BJ has greatly expanded the Committee’s visibility through partnerships with groups like the Philadelphia Pride March & Festival, Prevention Point, and the Greater Philadelphia Asian Service Center (“GPASS”), and

WHEREAS, BJ’s tenure as co-chair has been marked by a more intersectional approach, as he has expanded the Committee’s work beyond Center City and its whiter, more affluent constituency, and out into neighborhoods in North and West Philadelphia and beyond, with special consideration for our trans brothers and sisters of color; and

WHEREAS, For his work, BJ has earned high praise from law enforcement and community leaders, who unanimously credit his warmth, approachability, and listening skills as he lowers the temperature of tense situations and prevents bad situations from turning worse; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Council of the City of Philadelphia does hereby recognize Berisford “BJ” Jones for his tireless efforts toward improving relations between law enforcement and the communities they serve.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that an engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to BJ Jones as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.