Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title:	Recognizing the work and contributions of lifelong nurse and labor organizer Patricia (Patty) Eakin, who built worker power for the benefit of Philadelphia nurses and patients and whose leadership and mentorship has inspired generations of activists and leaders in the City of Philadelphia.				
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3/2/2023	0	CITY COUNCIL	Introduced and Ordered Placed on This Week's Final Passage Calendar		
3/2/2023	0	CITY COUNCIL	ADOPTED		

Recognizing the work and contributions of lifelong nurse and labor organizer Patricia (Patty) Eakin, who built worker power for the benefit of Philadelphia nurses and patients and whose leadership and mentorship has inspired generations of activists and leaders in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Patty Eakin was born on January 8th, 1949, and came of age during the growth of the Civil Rights Movement, women's rights movement, and anti-war movement, and always had a strong sense of what was fair and what wasn't; and

WHEREAS, After college and a year in Spain, she moved to Philadelphia with a friend, and began attending Thomas Jefferson University College of Health Professions, where she graduated with a 4.0 in 1976; then soon learned from another bedside nurse that no matter how good a nurse you are, if you have too many patients, you will fail, and the administration will always try to give you too many patients, so nurses have to stick together and be willing to fight for better conditions via a union, or else both nurses and patients will suffer; and

WHEREAS, She got her first nursing job as a public health nurse with the Visiting Nurse Association of Philadelphia, where she made house calls to patients living in Southwest Philadelphia and along with others successfully organized a union during her six years there; and

WHEREAS, She then decided she wanted to work at a unionized hospital and be involved in fights for safe staffing, so in 1983 went to Temple University Hospital, where she would sometimes have 13 patients at a time; and

WHEREAS, Eakin and other nurses were unhappy with the direction of their union and union leadership, and felt like the union wasn't supporting the fight for safe staffing ratios or against the privatization of hospitals, so she helped lead the fight to leave that union and start a new union for nurses and allied professionals: and

WHEREAS, Eakin mobilized and led an organizing team that included more than 500 women at Temple, in a challenging, but ultimately successful, effort that spanned not only nurses in Philadelphia, but those in Wilkes Barre, Scranton, Butler, and many suburban locations, to create the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals (PASNAP); and

WHEREAS, She served with distinction as the president of the Temple chapter of registered nurses first in the union Pennsylvania Nurses Association, then PSEA Healthcare, and finally PASNAP from 1993 to 2005; and

WHEREAS, She became the second statewide president of PASNAP in 2005, and served until 2018, while working full time as an ER nurse at Temple Hospital; and

WHEREAS, She led the fight against Temple Hospital management, who in 2010 sought to reduce wages, remove tuition benefits, increase health insurance costs, and silence their voices as patient advocates; and

WHEREAS, Eakin and her fellow nurses and healthcare professionals went on strike for 28 days, holding the line in the longest strike in the country that year and overcoming Temple's draconian non-disparagement clause and attempts to destroy decades of previous gains to win a resounding victory against union-busting managers who promised they would destroy the union in two weeks; and

WHEREAS, She played an integral role in growing the labor movement in Philadelphia, as president, organizing nurses at Hahnemann, St. Chris, Einstein, Delaware County Memorial Hospital, increasing the membership by 4,000 nurses and other staff; and

WHEREAS, in her organizing Eakin persistently worked to engage rank and file nurses in the life of the union, spending hours on the telephone or touring the hospital floors after working full time shifts in the Oncology Unit and then 12 hour shifts in the Emergency Department: and

WHEREAS, Eakin organized in Philadelphia and nationally to promote universal health care for all via Medicare For All because she and PASNAP believe that health care is a human right; and

WHEREAS, When access to healthcare for tens of thousands of Philadelphians was under attack as Republicans attempted to repeal Obamacare in 2017, Eakin and PASNAP were on the front lines, organizing the Coalition for Saving Healthcare in PA and defeating a calamitous attempt remove basic healthcare rights; and

WHEREAS, Eakin served from 2011 to 2018 as a Vice President on the executive council of the Philadelphia chapter of the AFL-CIO, working to protect and enhance the rights of all workers in the city; and

WHEREAS, Eakin was chosen in 2018 as Labor Woman of the Year by the Philadelphia Chapter of CLUW, the Coalition of Labor Union Women; and

WHEREAS, She helped to form 215 People's Alliance in 2014, and worked on many successful political campaigns, including helping to elect District Attorney Larry Krasner, Councilmember Isaiah Thomas, Councilmember Kendra Brooks, former Councilmember Helen Gym, and more; and

WHEREAS, Eakin has never stopped serving her community, giving out food in her Lawncrest community during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic; and

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WHEREAS, She continues to volunteer her time in Lawncrest, currently working on cleaning up and organizing around Snake Road; and

WHEREAS, She has been married to fellow activist, Ron Whitehorne, for 43 years and together they adopted and raised two children, Angel and Michael; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, that we hereby recognize the work and contributions of lifelong nurse and labor organizer Patricia (Patty) Eakin, who built worker power for the benefit of Philadelphia nurses and patients and whose leadership and mentorship has inspired generations of activists and leaders in the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Patty Eakin as an expression of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.

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