City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
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Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	260568	**Version:**	0	**Name:**	
Type:	Bill			**Status:**	IN COMMITTEE
File created:	5/28/2026			**In control:**	Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs
On agenda:				**Final action:**	
Title:	Designating the twenty-first day of May as the holiday “Ona Judge Day,” all under certain terms and conditions.				
Sponsors:	Councilmember Bass, Councilmember Phillips, Councilmember Lozada, Councilmember Harrity, Councilmember O'Rourke, Councilmember Squilla, Councilmember Ahmad				
Indexes:					
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Attachments:	1. Bill No. 26056800				

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result	Tally
5/28/2026	0	CITY COUNCIL	Introduced and Referred		

Designating the twenty-first day of May as the holiday “Ona Judge Day,” all under certain terms and conditions.

WHEREAS, Ona Judge was one of nine enslaved African descendants held in bondage by George Washington during his presidency from 1790-1797 at the President’s House located at 6th and Market Streets in Philadelphia, the site of America’s first “White House”; and

WHEREAS, On May 21, 1796, Ona Judge courageously escaped from bondage, resisting the institution of slavery and asserting her right to freedom, ultimately fleeing to New Hampshire where, as a free woman, she outlived George and Martha Washington by more than 50 years; and

WHEREAS, Ona Judge’s life represents a powerful act of resistance, self-determination, and courage, as she evaded repeated efforts to be recaptured and refused to return to enslavement despite pressure and pursuit; and

WHEREAS, Her story is a critical part of both Philadelphia’s and the nation’s history, illustrating the contradictions between the ideals of liberty and the realities of slavery in the founding of the United States; and

WHEREAS, Honoring May 21st of each year as “Ona Judge Day” in the City of Philadelphia and encourages residents, educators, institutions, and community organizations to commemorate this day through education, reflection, and programming that uplifts the history and legacy of Ona Judge and all those who resisted enslavement; now, therefore,

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA HEREBY ORDAINS:

SECTION 1. From this day forward, the twenty-first day of May is hereby designated the holiday Ona Judge Day.

SECTION 2. This Ordinance shall take effect immediately.

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