

Legislation Text

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Honoring and celebrating Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) for its leadership and advancement of public transportation and recognizing its numerous initiatives to improve public safety for SEPTA passengers and all Philadelphians.

WHEREAS, The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) which has more than 1,500 member organizations annually honors transportation agencies that demonstrate leadership and help advance public transportation and recently awarded SEPTA with the “Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement Award” for efforts to enhance service, efficiencies and overall effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, SEPTA Police Transit Officers are commissioned by the State Governor under the Street Railroad-Railway Act and exercise full police powers in the area served by SEPTA making it the fifth largest police department in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 260 sworn SEPTA Transit Police Officers serve and protect within the 2,200 square-mile SEPTA service area in the five county service region. There are seven patrol zones, allowing officers to easily respond to emergencies while empowering them to quickly make decisions and address local public safety issues; and

WHEREAS, The SEPTA Transit Police Department includes units of specially trained officers that receive an additional level of training in overall public safety and providing specialized support in policing a public transit system; and

WHEREAS, In November 2012, SEPTA Transit Police Officers initiated a special detail at Somerset Station - well known for drug trafficking, prostitution, loitering and the sale of drug paraphernalia - to improve public safety at the Station by staffing at least five officers on duty at all times; and

WHEREAS, Since the implementation of the special detail, SEPTA Transit Police Officers have made more than 185 arrests at Somerset Station and the surrounding area for criminal offenses such as disorderly conduct, drug trafficking and related violations, theft, vandalism, aggravated assault, loitering, weapons violations and more; and

WHEREAS, On February 14, 2013, a 7 year old boy, lost and alone in the City, was picked up by veteran SEPTA bus driver, Omar Waliyudden who as a result of SEPTA public safety training, noticed that the boy looked confused and scared. The driver encouraged the child to board the bus, then contacted the Philadelphia Police Department to help return the lost child to his parents; and

WHEREAS, On February 15, 2013, two SEPTA police officers, Officers Mike Gritsko and Patrick Barr rescued a 60-year old choking victim by utilizing their extensive training and natural instincts by quickly clearing the crowd and performing the Heimlich maneuver, thus saving the man's life; and

WHEREAS, On February 20, in conjunction with ongoing initiatives to improve public safety, SEPTA Police Officers received an U.S. Marshals Service alert flyer with a photo and description of fugitive Marvin Holmes

for “Escape after Conviction” and “Violation of Probation.” On February 26, the fugitive was identified near the corner of 10th and Filbert Streets by SEPTA Police Officer Lloyd Rodgers and placed under arrest based on the outstanding federal warrant; now therefore

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby recognizes SEPTA and for leadership and advancement in public transportation and all of the SEPTA Transit Police Officers for their outstanding efforts and achievements toward improving public safety, reducing crime and enhancing the quality of life for SEPTA passengers and all Philadelphians.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to SEPTA General Manager Joseph M. Casey and the SEPTA Transit Police Department, as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.