

Legislation Text

File #: 130965, **Version:** 0

Honoring Ralph's Italian Restaurant as the oldest Italian restaurant in the United States.

WHEREAS, In 1893, Francesco and Catherine Dispigno, along with their young son, Ralph, left Naples, Italy and made their way to the United States. After landing at Ellis Island, they moved to Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, In May 1900, the Dispignos opened a restaurant at Ninth and Montrose Streets, in the heart of the Italian Market. They named the restaurant after their son, Ralph; and

WHEREAS, By 1915, the restaurant had become so popular that the Dispignos needed more room. They purchased their current location, a three story 19th century brownstone at 760 S. Ninth Street that had previously been a boarding house. The first two floors were converted to a bar and restaurant with the top floor serving as a hotel; and

WHEREAS, Over the years, Ralph's has been patronized not only by Philadelphians but by many celebrities who performed at Palumbo's. Stars like Frank Sinatra, Lena Horne, Jimmy Durante, Al Martino, Tony Bennett, Louis Prima and more recently, James Darren (who grew up around the corner from Ralph's), Frankie Avalon, Bobby Rydell, and others became regular patrons and friends; and

WHEREAS, In 1982, Jimmy Rubino, the great grandson of Francesco and Catherine Dispigno and the grandson of the original Ralph took over as head chef and operator of Ralph's, having been working at the restaurant since he was 6 years old; and

WHEREAS, Ralph's Italian Restaurant today retains the same charm and ambiance of the original restaurant, with the preserved tile floor and reproductions of the original painted murals and artwork; and

WHEREAS, For over 100 years people have come from all over Philadelphia, the Delaware Valley and beyond to enjoy the warmth and hospitality and most especially, the food at Ralph's. The same wonderful recipes that Catherine Dispigno cooked for her friends and patrons in 1900 are still delighting patrons today; now, therefore

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we recognize and honor Ralph's Italian Restaurant not only as the oldest Italian restaurant in the United States, but as a shining example of the finest Philadelphia has to offer in the way of Italian dining.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Jimmy Rubino and Ralph's Italian Restaurant as evidence of the gratitude, admiration and sincere respect of this legislative body.