



Legislation Text

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Authorizing a joint public hearing by City Council's Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs and Committee on Global Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative Economy on the impact and feasibility of Philadelphia hosting major, international events, including party conventions, the Olympics and the Semiquincentennial celebration in 2026.

WHEREAS, The Centennial International Exhibition of 1876, the first official World's Fair in the United States, was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from May 10 to November 10, 1876, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia. Officially named the International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures and Products of the Soil and Mine, it was held in Fairmount Park along the Schuylkill River. About 10 million visitors attended, equivalent to about 20% of the population of the United States at the time; and

WHEREAS, The Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition of 1926 was a world's fair in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the signing of the United States Declaration of Independence, and the 50th anniversary of the 1876 Centennial Exposition. The fair drew about 10 million visitors. Organizers constructed an 80 foot replica of the Exposition's symbol, the Liberty Bell, covered in 26,000 light bulbs, that hung over Broad Street. Sesqui-Centennial Stadium (later known as Philadelphia Municipal Stadium, and after 1964, John F. Kennedy Stadium) was built in conjunction with the fair. In 1926 the first bridge (later renamed Benjamin Franklin Bridge) spanning the Delaware River between center city Philadelphia and Camden, New Jersey, was built in anticipation of the attending crowds; and

WHEREAS, The plans for the Bicentennial began when Congress created the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission on July 4, 1966. Initially, the Bicentennial celebration was planned as a single city exposition that would be staged in either Philadelphia, Pennsylvania or Boston, Massachusetts. After 6½ years of tumultuous debate, the Commission recommended that there should not be a single event, and Congress dissolved it on December 11, 1973, and created the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, which was charged with encouraging and coordinating locally sponsored events across the country; and

WHEREAS, Despite the fact that no city was selected as the primary celebration location for the Bicentennial, as site of the Continental Congress and signing of the Declaration of Independence, Philadelphia was selected to host the 1976 NBA All-Star Game, the 1976 National Hockey League All-Star Game, the 1976 NCAA Final Four, and the 1976 Major League Baseball All-Star Game at which President Ford threw out the first pitch; and

WHEREAS, In 1985, Philadelphia co-hosted Live-Aid, an event to raise funds for relief of the ongoing Ethiopian famine. The event was held simultaneously in London, but 100,000 attended the portion held in Philadelphia. An estimated global audience of 1.9 billion, across 150 nations, watched the live broadcast. In 2005, Philadelphia co-hosted Live 8, a concert timed to coincide with the G8 summit and the 20th anniversary of Live-Aid. Over 1 million people attended the concert on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway; and

WHEREAS, In 2000, Philadelphia hosted the Republican National Convention. The convention yielded \$345 million in total sales, produced the equivalent of 4,777 full-time jobs and \$167 million in personal income.

Philadelphia sales tax revenues rose 16.6 percent in July and August 2000, compared with the same months in 1999. Conventioneers spent more than 111,000 nights in regional hotels, bringing in nearly \$25 million in revenue. That boosted the city's draw from hotel taxes by 30 percent over the same period in 1999. Further, at least 19,000 articles mentioned Philadelphia and the convention, yielding 128 billion impressions when accounting for circulation; and

WHEREAS, In 2001, Philadelphia hosted the X-Games, an annual sports event, controlled and arranged by the U.S. sports broadcaster ESPN (with coverage also shown on its sister network ABC), which focuses on extreme sports. Over 200,000 people attended the event at the First Union Center. Philadelphia hosted the event in 2002 as well, with an average of 40,000 people attending the events on a daily basis; and

WHEREAS, In 2005, Philadelphia unsuccessfully submitted a bid to be the United States bid for the 2016 Olympics host city. London ultimately won the bid to host the 2012 Olympics, which boosted London's economy by over \$16 billion; and

WHEREAS, In 2014, Philadelphia indicated its interest in hosting the 2016 Democratic National Convention; and

WHEREAS, If Philadelphia wishes to capitalize on its ability to host future political party conventions, international athletic competitions and the world's celebration of the United States' Semiquincentennial celebration in 2026, time is of the essence; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That a joint public hearing be held by the Committee on Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs and the Committee on Global Opportunities and the Creative/Innovative Economy hearings on the impact on and feasibility of Philadelphia hosting major, international events, including party conventions, the Olympics and the Semiquincentennial celebration in 2026.