

Legislation Text

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Recognizing, honoring, and remembering the lives of Charles J. Borelli and Roger Courtland, writers and composers of the Philadelphia Eagles Victory Song otherwise known as “Fly Eagles Fly” which has been sung in support of the Philadelphia Eagles for over sixty years.

WHEREAS, Although the history is not certain, Charles Borelli, the son of a South Philadelphia theater owner, was most likely the composer of the musical portion of the song. Borelli was the studio pianist for WCAU-AM here in Philadelphia, working with such stars as Al Jolson, George M. Cohan, and Franny Brice; and

WHEREAS, Roger Courtland lived in Wyndmoor, and in addition to his day job with an ad-agency, he also led a band of union musicians that played at each Eagles home game. Playing in the grandstands of Franklin Field, Courtland’s band was almost certainly inspired by the band of the rival Washington based franchise and their tune, “Hail to the R-----”; and

WHEREAS, Long-time Eagles P.R. director Jim Gallagher remembers the use of the song as far back as the 1940’s, with the lyrics and music printed in the game programs; and

WHEREAS, The song’s use reached its peak on December 26, 1960, when it was belted out loud and proud by Eagles fans throughout Franklin Field as the team, led by Norm Van Brocklin, Tommy McDonald, and Chuck Bednarik, defeated the Green Bay Packers to win the organization’s sole NFL Championship; and

WHEREAS, For the 1963 season, the Eagles established their 220 member “Philadelphia Eagles Sound of Brass” band. The band bellowed the song after every Eagles victory up until the 1969 season, when it was disbanded by new owner Leonard Tose. Under Tose’s ownership, the song fell into disuse, due to changing times and poor performance on the field; and

WHEREAS, The song returned for the 1999 season, and was performed by the newly formed Philadelphia Eagles Pep Band, with the newly added final spelled-out postscript. Since then, through many successful winning seasons, fans throughout the Philadelphia region have rejoiced in singing its refrains; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Eagles Victory Song has brought together members of different races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds all in support of one cause - the success of the Philadelphia Eagles. Mr. Borelli, Mr. Courtland, and their survivors deserve our thanks and gratitude for their great contribution to our shared history; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby recognize, honor, and remember the lives of Charles J. Borelli and Roger Courtland, writers and composers of the Philadelphia Eagles Victory Song, otherwise known as “Fly Eagles Fly” which has been sung in support of the Philadelphia Eagles for over sixty years.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Philadelphia Eagles organization as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.

