Legislation Text

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Honoring the African American Children's Book Project on the occasion its 24th Annual African American Children's Book Fair and that February 6th is a continuation of its on-going National Literacy Initiative - Preserve a Legacy, Buy a Book.

WHEREAS, In 1926, noted historian Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the study of negro life and history announced the second week of February to be "Negro History Week"; and

WHEREAS, The 2nd week in February was chosen because of the birthdays of President Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass; and

WHEREAS, During early American history, African Americans were not allowed to learn to read and have books; in some states the penalty for this infraction was death; and

WHEREAS, The importance of book fairs cannot be understated and for twenty three years the African American Children's Book Project has enhanced multi-cultural literacy in our City utilizing the joy of reading as a tool; and

WHEREAS, Vanesse Lloyd-Sgambati, the founder of The African American Children's Book Project created the book fair because she believes books open up a world of opportunities for children and after twenty four years, The African American Children's Book Fair is one of the oldest and largest single-day events for children's books in the country, with an average yearly attendance of more than 3,500. It features nationally known award winning and bestselling authors/illustrators, many of whom have won the prestigious American Library Association Coretta Scott King Award. These authors/illustrators have produced some of the best books of our generation; and

WHEREAS, One of the most important reasons to encourage reading in our children is that studies show that the children who read outside of their normal school course work tend to make more positive lifestyle decisions as they grow older; and

WHEREAS, Parents, caregivers and educators from the tristate area are very supportive of the African American Children's Book Fair because they understand that children who read outside of their normal school course work make more responsible decisions about their lifestyles. Adults who attended as children now bring their children; and

WHEREAS, Strictly judging by attendance the fair is a tremendous success as well over 3,500 people attended the Fair in past years; and

WHEREAS, Rich or poor, no one leaves empty handed as the books themselves are priced at a level where they are more affordable. Posters, bookmarkers, and raffle books are distributed free of charge to attendees; and

WHEREAS, The fun-filled afternoon is packed with activities that promote the power and JOY OF READING. Award Winning, Bestselling Authors and Illustrators make presentations and sign their books. The Literary

Row will distribute book-related promotional materials free of charge. The Educator's Book Giveaway sponsored by our corporate partners distribute free of charge brand new books to teachers/librarians for use in their schools. The NBC10-TELEMUNDO62 Reading Circle gives children brand new books of the guest authors/illustrators. The PECO LITERARY SALON showcases interactive workshops that incorporate reading. For some children it is the first time they will own a book. In addition there is a wide selection of affordable literature available to purchase; and

WHEREAS, Two of the esteemed participants will be Wade and Cheryl Hudson. The Hudsons' were two parents on a desperate search for children's books that addressed Black history, Black heritage and Black experiences. Disappointed by the limited number and their unreliable availability, the couple embarked upon a mission: to produce the kind of positive, vibrant Black-interest books that they wanted for their own two children; and

WHEREAS, In 1988, the Hudsons started Just Us Books, Inc. With Wade serving as company president and head of marketing, and Cheryl leading the editorial and art departments, Just Us Books, Inc. soon became a leading publisher of multicultural books for children, opening doors of opportunities for many authors and illustrators of color along the way; and

WHEREAS, The Hudsons trailblazing efforts and contributions to children's literature and book publishing have been recognized widely. They have received the Ida B. Wells Institutional Builders Award presented by the National Black Writers Conference, the Madame CJ Walker Legacy Award for entrepreneurship given by the Hurston Wright Foundation and the "Small Business Pioneer of the Year" distinction from Income Opportunities magazine, among others. The books they have published have enabled children of color everywhere to see characters who look like themselves in the books they read and explore stories that relate to their own experiences; and

WHEREAS, After 27 years Just Us Books is still one of only a handful of Black-owned publishing companies in the nation and one of several exclusively dedicated to producing Black-interest and multicultural books for children and young adults; and

WHEREAS, Two additional individuals being honored for being champions of literacy in Philadelphia are Sharon Powell, Senior Director of Government and Regulatory Affairs for Comcast Corporation and Tiffany Tavarez, Corporate Contributions Manager for Exelon; and

WHEREAS, The Book Fair is also lucky to have terrific sponsors: such as NBC10-TELEMUNDO62, PECO, Comcast, Wells Fargo, Health Partners Plans, Health Partners Foundation, Always Best Care Senior Services, Community College Of Philadelphia, The Literary Media and Publishing Consultants, Tierney, Marian B. Tasco, Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, Councilman Kenyatta Johnson and Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, Media Partners WUSL-FM, WDAS-FM, and WURD-AM all have been instrumental in keeping the literary flames ablaze for our children in the City of Philadelphia through tireless contributions to the African American Children's Book Project; The financial contributions have enabled the book fair to give away thousands of brand new books of the guest authors/illustrators participating in the event. For many children, it is the first time they will own a book; and

WHEREAS, The 24th Annual African American Book Fair will be held free of charge on Saturday February 6th from one to three pm at the gymnasium of the Community College of Philadelphia located at 17th & Spring Garden Streets; now, therefore, be it

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RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby honor the African American Children's Book Project on the occasion of the 24th Annual African American Children's Book Fair and that February 6th is the Kick-Off of the National Literacy Initiative - Preserve a Legacy, Buy a Book.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to representatives of the African American Children's Book Project, Wade and Cheryl Hudson, Sharon Powell, and Tiffany Tavarez for their hard work and efforts in the promotion of children's literacy, as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.