

Legislation Text

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Recognizing April 15, 2016, as a day honoring the lifetime achievements and lasting influence of Jackie Robinson and apologizing for the racism he faced as a player while visiting Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Jack Roosevelt Robinson was born in Cairo, Georgia in 1919 to a family of sharecroppers; and

WHEREAS, Growing up in a large, single-parent family, Jackie Robinson lived in Pasadena, CA, where he lettered in four sports at John Muir High School and held the national junior college broad jump record while at Pasadena Junior College; and

WHEREAS, As a student at UCLA, Jackie Robinson became the school's first athlete in history to earn varsity letters in four sports: baseball, basketball, football and track; and

WHEREAS, Jackie Robinson was drafted and honorably served as a second lieutenant in the US Army from 1942-1945; and

WHEREAS, On April 15, 1947 Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier by becoming the first African American to play Major League Baseball since 1889; and

WHEREAS, Named the 1947 National League Rookie of the Year, Jackie Robinson led the league in stolen bases in 1947 and 1949, won the 1949 batting title with a .342 average and led the Dodgers to win the 1955 World Series; and

WHEREAS, Jackie Robinson was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962 and was the first African American to receive this honor; and

WHEREAS, Jackie Robinson achieved these manifold accomplishments in the face of extreme discrimination and harassment both on and off the field; and

WHEREAS, While playing in Philadelphia with the Dodgers, Jackie Robinson had particularly virulent racism directed against him, with a hotel refusing to provide him with accommodations and the manager of the Phillies leading the team in taunting him to "go back to the cotton fields" and calling him racial slurs; and

WHEREAS, His bravery and leadership in pushing back against segregation benefited countless people during his lifetime and beyond and his example continues to inspire young athletes to this day; and

WHEREAS, After baseball, Jackie Robinson became the first African American to serve as Vice President of a major corporation; was the first African American analyst for ABC's Major League Baseball Game of the Week; helped establish the Freedom National Bank, then the largest black owned and operated bank in the state of New York; and founded the Jackie Robinson Construction Company, which built homes for low income families; and

WHEREAS, Jackie Robinson's tireless efforts to eradicate racial injustice both on and off the field earned him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Congressional Gold Medal and five honorary degrees; and

WHEREAS, Major League Baseball renamed the Rookie of the Year Award the Jackie Robinson Award in his honor; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Robinson's legacy continues through the Jackie Robinson Foundation which provides scholarships to students in need; and

WHEREAS, the City of Philadelphia commemorates Jackie Robinson for a courageous life that fought for the ideal that America's freedoms are worthy of all Americans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That City Council hereby recognize, honor, and celebrate April 15, 2016, as a day honoring the lifetime achievements and lasting influence of Jackie Robinson and apologizing for the racism he faced as a player while visiting Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Rachel Robinson as further evidence of the sincere admiration and gratitude of this legislative body.