

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and designating May 1, 2016 as International Workers' Day, a day to honor and celebrate the manifold achievements of workers, and the historical and continuing struggle of labor movements for justice and fair working conditions.

WHEREAS, May Day or International Workers' Day is a day of remembrance that celebrates the lives and accomplishments of workers; and

WHEREAS, May Day's modern form took shape on May 1, 1886, when the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions - in response to workers who were being forced to work more than twelve hours a day - passed a resolution stating that eight hours should legally constitute a day's work; and

WHEREAS, When employers refused to recognize this demand, workers went on strike across the nation in protest, and the bloody 1886 Haymarket Square massacre quickly became a rallying point for workers in the struggle for the eight-hour workday; and

WHEREAS, Historically, workers organized to achieve the key elements of a safe and sustainable work environment, which began with an eight-hour work day, minimum wage, and basic physical protections, and progressed to include a right to family and medical leave and protection against discrimination; and

WHEREAS, The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights pledges that every human individual has core labor rights that include equal pay for equal work, a right to rest and leisure, and the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his or her interests; and

WHEREAS, The right to unionize remains a hard-won struggle, with union organizers facing violence and threats even today, from factory workers in Bangladesh to Coca-Cola workers in Central and South America to day-laborers and migrant workers in the U.S. and around the world; and

WHEREAS, Each year millions of workers take to the streets on International Workers' Day in protest and celebration; and

WHEREAS, May Day is a national holiday honoring workers in more than 80 countries, but not in the United States; and

WHEREAS, By not celebrating the legacy of May Day, we deny the historical and current significance of labor movements, their work on behalf of social justice, and the importance of the rights we owe to them; and

WHEREAS, Today, as inequality grows and workers face new attempts to undermine traditional labor protections, unions play an ever-more significant role in safeguarding the rights of workers; and

WHEREAS, In the U.S., workers face new attempts to undermine traditional labor protections and collective bargaining rights, including coordinated attacks such as Right to Work laws and attempts to misclassify workers

as independent contractors; and

WHEREAS, Social-justice unionism and progressive unions are needed more than ever to link workers' struggles to broader fights against unprecedented wealth inequality in Philadelphia, in our nation and around the world; and

WHEREAS, Progressive unions understand the importance of fighting for racial equality as well as equality in all aspects of the labor movement; and

WHEREAS, The next generation of workers is charting a bold political vision and using new tactics to agitate for increased wages, safe working conditions, equal pay for all classes of workers, immigrant rights, and robust benefits for both workers and their families; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That City Council hereby designates May 1, 2016 as International Workers' Day, a day to honor and celebrate the manifold achievements of workers, and the historical and continuing struggle of labor movements for justice and fair working conditions.