

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and Honoring American Bible Society on the Occasion of its 200th Anniversary.

WHEREAS, American Bible Society was founded on May 11, 1816. Philadelphia native Elias Boudinot, a president of the Continental Congress, served as its first president. Other early leaders of American Bible Society included John Jay, Francis Scott Key, and John Quincy Adams; and

WHEREAS, American Bible Society originally sought to unite more localized Bible societies with the goal to distribute the Bible across the country. This vision soon expanded worldwide. Over the past 200 years, American Bible Society has distributed approximately 6 billion Bibles around the world; and

WHEREAS, American Bible Society has supported the American military since its founding. It distributed Bibles to the American military for the first time in 1817, and it has delivered Bibles and New Testaments to American soldiers in every war in which American troops have participated since the Mexican-American War in 1846; and

WHEREAS, In a 1901 address to an auxiliary of American Bible Society, then-Vice President Theodore Roosevelt remarked, "Every thinking man, when he thinks, realizes what a very large number of people tend to forget that the teachings of the Bible are so interwoven and entwined with our whole civic and social life that it would be literally... impossible for us to figure to ourselves what that life would be if these teachings were removed. We would lose almost all the standards by which we now judge both public and private morals; all the standings toward which we, with more or less of resolution, strive to raise ourselves"; and

WHEREAS, A pioneering spirit has always been a vital part of American Bible Society's success and longevity. It co-published the first Bible in Braille in 1842. Between 1918 and 1919, American Bible Society appointed its first women board members and two women vice presidents, a year before women had the right to vote in America. In 2012 it introduced The Digital Bible Library. Visitors to American Bible Society's website can search the Bible in over 582 versions and over 466 languages. New endeavors include developing Bible-based online games and virtual reality programs to help new audiences discover the stories found in the Bible; and

WHEREAS, After nearly 200 years in New York City, American Bible Society moved into a new Philadelphia headquarters at 101 North Independence Mall East in August 2015. Most of American Bible Society's approximately 200 employees work in this new office; and

WHEREAS, The bicentennial legacy of American Bible Society is a testament to over 200 years of religious liberty in Philadelphia and the United States which has proven beneficial to moral, civic, and public life. Philadelphia is excited to build its relationship with American Bible Society as it celebrates the promising start of a new century, establishes a wider presence, and has a deeper impact in its new home; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize and honor American Bible Society on the occasion of its 200th Anniversary.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to American Bible Society, evidencing the sincere admiration and respect of this legislative body.