

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and Honoring Ralston Center for Improving the Health and Quality of Life of Older Philadelphians on the Occasion of its 200th Anniversary Celebration.

WHEREAS, Ralston Center has been an advocate for aging in Philadelphia since 1817. Ralston Center's sole focus is the quality of life of older adults. They serve people 55 years of age and older by helping them receive the services and support they need in order to live in their homes and communities as they age; and

WHEREAS, Ralston Center was founded as the Indigent Widows and Single Women's Society on January 9, 1817 under the leadership of Sarah Ralston. At the time, it was Philadelphia's first and only home established strictly for aging women. While the original building, Ralston House, originally operated as a residence for older adults, it now serves as the organization's administrative headquarters and the home of the University of Pennsylvania's Institute on Aging and Penn Medicine's Division of Geriatric Medicine, which treat elderly patients and conduct research on memory, Alzheimer's, sleep disorders, behavioral health, and nursing. In 2001, Ralston expanded to include residences for low-income seniors through the Joseph J. Hill Ralston-Mercy Douglass House a few blocks away from Ralston House; and

WHEREAS, A variety of programs and services are offered through Ralston Center. This includes Ralston My Way, which helps provide people age 55 years and older with affordable homecare, transportation, repairs, chores, and yard work. In addition, Ralston offers Wellness Programs specifically tailored to those 55 years and older in order to increase their fitness and ability to perform everyday activities and reduce pain or discomfort. These programs help seniors remain independent in their communities as they age; and

WHEREAS, Ralston's Age-Friendly Initiative is in collaboration with more than 40 local organizations determined to create a more livable community for underserved older West Philadelphians. The initiative is particularly innovative since it brings together local and city-wide stakeholders to make West Philadelphia more age-friendly and conducive towards older adults' health, well-being, and ability to age in place; and

WHEREAS, The Age-Friendly Initiative launched three initial projects in 2016 to meet the most pressing needs of older West Philadelphians after conducting comprehensive environmental assessments, secondary research, meetings and focus groups, and dialogues with community members; and

WHEREAS, Ralston's Age-Friendly Places Project concentrates on removing barriers in West Philadelphia neighborhoods which prevent older adults from using neighborhood amenities. It pilots ways in which public parks and spaces can be safer and more inviting to seniors and people of all ages. The Age-Friendly Resource Network Navigation Project seeks to use educational programming and navigational assistance to comprehensively address the need for increased access to, and navigation of, existing resources by older West Philadelphians. The Food & Company Project will improve older West Philadelphians' access to fresh foods and nutritional resources and provide increased opportunities for social connection; and

WHEREAS, Quality of life in aging is a critical issue, as the population of citizens older than 55 years of age in Philadelphia is growing and will continue to do so. Ralston Center is Philadelphia's oldest nonprofit

nondenominational organization focused solely on this issue. Throughout its 200 years, the organization has evolved by offering innovative programming and services to meet the needs and advocate on behalf of Philadelphia's aging population. Ralston Center is continuously expanding its initiatives through a highly skilled leadership team that seeks to embrace undiscovered opportunities to serve seniors; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize and honor Ralston Center for improving the health and quality of life of older Philadelphians on the occasion of its 200th Anniversary Celebration.

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