

Legislation Text

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Declaring March 31st Transgender Day of Visibility in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, One million Americans are transgender and have bravely overcome significant hardships to build vibrant and thriving communities, often in the face of systemic and interpersonal prejudice, discrimination, and violence; and

WHEREAS, We cannot simply celebrate visibility without also recognizing that it does not always equal justice; still far too many Trans people, in particular Trans women of color, continue to face profound threats to their safety and wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, Already this year we know of eight Trans women of color who were murdered -- Jaquarius Holland, 18 years old; Ciara McElveen, 21 years old; Chyna Gibson, 31 years old; Keke Collier, 24 years old; JoJo Striker, 23 years old; Mesha Caldwell, 41 years old; Jamie Lee Wounded Arrow, 28 years old; and Alphonza Watson, 38 years old -- for each Trans person killed or lost this year and in years past we mourn, we honor, and we say their names; and

WHEREAS, We also celebrate the beauty and resilience of Trans people through history and of those who are with us today, and we recognize that Trans people have contributed and continue to contribute in myriad ways to the betterment of our society and our City, often working at the forefront of social justice activism and human rights work; and

WHEREAS, Trans people, and in particular Trans women of color including Sylvia Rivera, Miss Major, and Marsha P. Johnson, were instrumental in the creation of the modern gay rights movement in the United States, from the 1965 Dewey lunch counter protests in Philadelphia to the Stonewall riots in 1969 to the creation of radical new civil rights organizations; and

WHEREAS, Trans and gender nonconforming Americans have made profound strides in challenging social and political norms that had forced many to live in secrecy regarding their gender identity, sentenced them to coercive medical and psychological treatments, and denied them employment and housing opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Civil rights victories won by Trans activists have expanded judicial recognition of constitutional protections for gender identity and expression, and provided a greater number of people with the basic protections needed to ensure human dignity and self-determination, however these rights are still not universally guaranteed, with laws varying by state and locality and regressive measures still being pursued; and

WHEREAS, As a result of determined activism and advocacy, Trans people now serve as religious and educational leaders, reach the highest levels of athletic competition, star in film and television, and serve in prominent government positions, beginning to reverse many years of tragic exclusion; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia and across the country, Trans people have courageously and powerfully organized in response to hate crimes and violence that have been directed at members of their community, especially at

Trans women of color, nonetheless receiving insufficient mainstream coverage and recognition; and

WHEREAS, We recognize and celebrate the work that is being done by Trans advocacy groups to continue to fight for dignity and equal rights for members of the Trans community, to build inclusive and healing spaces, and to protect and defend those who are most vulnerable including people with disabilities and in prison; and

WHEREAS, While Philadelphia has helped lead the way in extending nondiscrimination protections and equal benefits to Trans people, including Trans youth in our School District, this commitment is ever more needed in the face of threats that the federal government will curtail or abandon its enforcement of civil rights protections and deeply cut healthcare and other crucial programs; and

WHEREAS, In Philadelphia, we believe in the inherent value of each and every resident of our City, including especially our Trans and gender nonconforming residents, without exception; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the City of Philadelphia declares March 31st as Transgender Day of Visibility.