



## Legislation Text

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Recognizing and Honoring Philadelphia's Stephen Starr, Michael Solomonov, and Greg Vernick as Winners of the 2017 James Beard Awards.

WHEREAS, Established in 1990, the James Beard Awards recognize culinary professionals for excellence and achievement in their fields and celebrate, nurture, and honor chefs and other leaders making America's food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. They are considered the most prestigious culinary awards in America, and *Time* has called them "the Oscars of the food world"; and

WHEREAS, Facing extremely tough national competition, 20 restaurants, chefs, and restaurateurs from the Greater Philadelphia area were named semifinalists for the 2017 James Beard Awards; and

WHEREAS, On May 1, 2017, 3 individuals based in Philadelphia were announced as winners at the 2017 James Beard Foundation Awards in Chicago-a major recognition of the excellent culinary scene in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, The 2017 James Beard Award for Outstanding Restaurateur was presented to Stephen Starr of Starr Restaurants, based in Philadelphia. This award is given to a working restaurateur who sets high national standards in restaurant operations and entrepreneurship. Philadelphia alone is home to 19 popular Stephen Starr restaurants; and

WHEREAS, The 2017 James Beard Award for Outstanding Chef was presented to Michael Solomonov of Zahav in Philadelphia. This award is given to a working chef in America whose career has set national industry standards and who has served as an inspiration to other food professionals. Solomonov and chef-business partner Steven Cook own 6 restaurant brands in Philadelphia including Zahav, their first restaurant; and

WHEREAS, The 2017 James Beard Award for Best Chef: Mid-Atlantic was presented to Greg Vernick of Vernick Food & Drink in Philadelphia. This award is given to a chef who has set new or consistent standards of excellence in Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. While Vernick's restaurant near Rittenhouse Square has been open for only 5 years, he was a James Beard Award finalist for the past 3 consecutive years; and

WHEREAS, For years, Philadelphians and visitors have enjoyed exquisite dining experiences at restaurants run by Stephen Starr, Michael Solomonov, and Greg Vernick, now validated by the 2017 James Beard Awards as some of the finest in the United States. Philadelphia's James Beard Award winners feed the growth of the City's creative economy, and this recognition bolsters the City's reputation as a growing hub of excellence in creativity and culture; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia takes great pride in its food, and Michael Solomonov, Stephen Starr, and Greg Vernick's restaurants are beloved local favorites. These Philadelphians are more than deserving of their illustrious awards, and the City of Philadelphia applauds their significant contributions in building the local restaurant scene into one which now receives national renown; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby recognizes and honors Philadelphia's Stephen Starr, Michael Solomonov, and Greg Vernick as winners of the 2017 James Beard Awards.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That Engrossed copies of the resolution be presented to Stephen Starr, Michael Solomonov, and Greg Vernick as evidence of the admiration and respect of this legislative body.