

Legislation Text

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Recognizing, commemorating, and celebrating the Centennial Anniversary of the Historic First Korean Congress held in Philadelphia from April 14 to April 16, 1919.

WHEREAS, On March 1, 1919, thirty-three core Korean-Independence activists signed the Korean Declaration of Independence from Imperial Japan in the Korean capital city of Seoul. The public reading of the Declaration on that same day ignited non-violent protests throughout the country. By the time the movement was suppressed by the Japanese 12 months later, approximately 2,000,000 Koreans had participated in the more than 1,500 demonstrations. The struggle killed 7,000 people, and wounded an additional 16,000 people. This massive public resistance came to be called the March First Movement; and

WHEREAS, Although the March First Movement did not result in an immediate liberation of Korea, it became the catalyst for the Korean national independence movement, joined by Koreans living abroad, including the United States. It also inspired other countries in Asia, particularly China and India, to participate in the cause for the right of a people to self-determination; and

WHEREAS, Philip Jaisohn, a Korean political refugee who made his home in Media, PA, made Philadelphia a central overseas base for supporting Korean independence. Inspired by the First and Second Continental Congress of the United States held in Philadelphia, Philip Jaisohn, Syngman Rhee, who became the first Korean President of the Republic of Korea, and Han Kyong Jung organized The First Korean Congress in Philadelphia at the Little Theatre located on 17th and Delancey Streets from April 14 to April 16, 1919. A delegation of 150 Korean representatives and Americans participated in the First Korean Congress and on the last day, with the support from the City of Philadelphia, they marched in solidarity from the Little Theatre to Independence Hall, where the Korean Declaration of Independence was once again proclaimed to the world; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia is the birthplace of American Independence, and it became the symbol of freedom for other oppressed peoples; and

WHEREAS, Following the First Korean Congress, Philadelphia became the birthplace of the League of Friends of Korea in America that was organized in 21 American cities as well as in London and France to support Korean independence; and

WHEREAS, The Korean American Community of Philadelphia will come together to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the March First Movement in U.S. and the First Korean Congress, which will be held in Philadelphia from April 12 to April 14, 2019 with the following signature events: a symposium entitled, "Reflection of the First Korean Congress"; a reenactment of the actual march by the participants of the First Korean Congress; and a closing gala to commemorate the friendship between the U.S. and Korea; and

WHEREAS, The three-day celebration will be organized by the First Korean Congress Centennial Celebration Organizing Committee representing the following notable Korean American organizations: Korean American

Association of Greater Philadelphia; Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation; Council of Korean Churches of Greater Philadelphia; Senior Citizens Association of Greater Philadelphia; Syngman Rhee Memorial Foundation; National Association for Korean Schools, Mid-Atlantic Chapter; Korean American Association of Southern New Jersey; Hung Sa Dahn (Young Korean Academy), Philadelphia Chapter; Greater Philadelphia Korean American Association of 5 Northern Province; Korean Veterans Association of the Philadelphia Region; and the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Reunification of the Republic of Korea; and

WHEREAS, Our own Councilwoman Helen Gym and Councilman David Oh will serve as Honorary Co-Chairs of the First Korean Congress Centennial Celebration Advisory Committee; and

WHEREAS, The people of Philadelphia have had a long and valued friendship with the people of Korea, including our Sister City, Incheon Metropolitan City. On behalf of the City of Philadelphia, we congratulate the Korean American Community for celebrating the centennial anniversary of the First Korean Congress and the spirit of independence that it embodies, and we encourage all Philadelphians to participate in the events that will be open to the public; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That this body hereby recognizes and celebrates the centennial anniversary of the historic First Korean Congress held in Philadelphia from April 14 to April 16, 1919.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Ambassador Hyo-Sung Park, Consul General of The Republic of Korea in New York City, as a testament to the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Byeong Gi Jang, Co-Chair, the First Korean Congress Centennial Celebration Organizing Committee, and President, the Korean American Association of Greater Philadelphia, as a testament to the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to J.S. George Choe, Co-Chair, the First Korean Congress Centennial Celebration Organizing Committee, and President, the Philip Jaisohn Memorial Foundation, as a testament to the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.