

Legislation Text

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Also naming Broad Street from Lenox Avenue to West Venango Street, and Broad Street from West Oxford Street to Master Street, as “Rev. Dr. Leon H. Sullivan Way” to honor the ministry of Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan and his tremendous impact on the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Born in Charleston, West Virginia in 1922, Leon Sullivan became a Baptist minister at the age of 18, attended the Union Theological Seminary from 1943 to 1945 and received a Master’s Degree in religion from Columbia University in 1947; and

WHEREAS, In 1950, Rev. Sullivan became pastor of Philadelphia’s Zion Baptist Church for 38 years until his retirement in 1988; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia’s Zion Baptist Church was Rev. Sullivan’s base for the programs and initiatives he provided to underserved communities in Philadelphia and later worldwide; and

WHEREAS, In 1964, after leading protest campaigns to expose discriminatory hiring and open thousands of jobs to African Americans, Rev. Sullivan founded and led the first Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America, Inc. (OIC), in an abandoned Philadelphia jail at 19th and Oxford Streets. OIC is a vocational, educational, and life skills training program designed to prepare men and women for full-time employment that still provides services and has helped create a better life for thousands of Philadelphians and millions worldwide; and

WHEREAS, In 1966, Rev. Sullivan founded the Sullivan Human Services Building which houses a variety of health care, educational, and other social services organizations; and

WHEREAS, In 1968, Rev. Sullivan founded Progress Plaza, the nation’s first African American owned shopping plaza, still in operation today, helped develop black-owned businesses while providing new jobs and services for the community; and

WHEREAS, Seeking to redress inner-city housing segregation, Rev. Sullivan purchased an apartment building in the predominantly white neighborhood of Oak Lane and built the Zion Gardens and Opportunity Towers apartment complexes, the first in a series of new housing options for those with physical disabilities, limited incomes, the homeless, and the elderly; and

WHEREAS, Rev. Sullivan’s incredible legacy and impact on the City of Philadelphia continues today; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Broad Street from Lenox Avenue to West Venango Street, and Broad Street from West Oxford Street to Master Street, also be named “Rev. Dr. Leon H. Sullivan Way” to honor the ministry of Reverend Dr. Leon H. Sullivan and his tremendous impact on the City of Philadelphia.

