

Legislation Text

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Formally apologizing on behalf of the Council of the City of Philadelphia for the decisions and events preceding and leading to the devastation that occurred on May 13, 1985, and establishing an annual day of observation, reflection and recommitment on May 13th, in the spirit of moving forward, reconciliation, justice, and harmony for all people of the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia acknowledges the immeasurable and enduring harm caused to citizens across our City, region and country as a result of officially sanctioned actions by the City of Philadelphia at 6221 Osage Avenue on May 13, 1985; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia acknowledges recklessness in communication, negotiation and conflict resolution management on the part of City of Philadelphia officials in crucial matters related to the MOVE Family, their neighbors, friends and the first responders leading up to, on the date of, and following the tragic events on May 13, 1985 in the 6200 block of Osage Avenue; and

WHEREAS, The leadership of the City of Philadelphia failed to use the best judgment and strategies to prevent unnecessary pain and suffering to the MOVE Family, their neighbors, friends and first responders; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia is committed to not supporting the use of excessive force against the citizens of Philadelphia that mirrors the force used at 6221 Osage Avenue on May 13, 1985; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia acknowledges the enduring pain caused by the unfortunate and unnecessary eleven deaths of five children and six adults:

- Netta Africa, age 12,
- Tree Africa, age 14,
- Phil Africa, age 11,
- Delisha Africa, age 12,
- Tomaso Africa, age 9,
- John Africa,
- Conrad Africa,
- Raymond Africa,

- Frank Africa,
- Rhonda Africa, and
- Theresa Africa,

on May 13, 1985 at 6221 Osage Avenue; and

WHEREAS The Council of the City of Philadelphia acknowledges the destruction of 61 homes in the 6200 block of Osage Avenue on May 13, 1985; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia acknowledges the enduring pain of the residents and property owners who were displaced May 13, 1985 from their homes on the 6200 block of Osage Avenue; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia acknowledges the harm caused on May 13, 1985 to first responders and their families as a result of those first responders following official orders issued by City leadership; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia hereby apologizes for the decisions leading to the devastation of May 13, 1985 and acknowledges the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality, and inhumanity of the MOVE Bombing; and

WHEREAS, There are echoes of the MOVE Bombing that persist in Philadelphia's police-community relations. Historical discrimination against people of color and unnecessary use of force has shaped a culture of distrust between police and residents; and

WHEREAS, The uprisings in Philadelphia and around the country in the wake of the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, David Jones and other Black and Brown people killed by the police reflects a reckoning with our country's past and the institutional racism and societal inequality that exists today; and

WHEREAS, In order to evolve and progress towards a more equal and just society, we must confront, reflect upon and learn from heinous government actions of the past; and

WHEREAS, The Council of the City of Philadelphia hereby establishes an annual day of observation, reflection and recommitment on May 13th, in order to remember the devastation of May 13, 1985, heal the wounds created on this day and prevent similar occurrences from happening again; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby formally apologizes on behalf of the Council of the City of Philadelphia for the decisions and events preceding and leading to the devastation that occurred on May 13, 1985, and establishes an annual day of observation, reflection and recommitment on May 13th, in the spirit of moving forward, reconciliation, justice, and harmony for all people of the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Africa family to further evidence the sincerity of this legislative body.