

Legislation Text

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Recognizing and honoring Philadelphia artist, musician, and anti-violence activist Michael “O.G. Law” Ta’Bon for his 15 years of work and advocacy on behalf of returning citizens, victims of crime, and disadvantaged youth in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Michael “O.G. Law” Ta’Bon is a Philadelphia musician, artist, and antiviolenace activist; and

WHEREAS, Ta’Bon goes where few would go - directly into the trenches of communities plagued by poverty and violence to preach a message of love over hate - in order to bring communities together and to prevent young Philadelphians from going down the wrong path; and

WHEREAS, Early mistakes in life landed Ta’Bon in prison, first at the age of 16 and again at age 24; and

WHEREAS, After serving a seven-year prison sentence, Ta’Bon committed to correcting the course of his life and sought to prevent others from going down the same path through violence prevention and community healing; and

WHEREAS, Ta’Bon began his public activism for peace in 2006 by bringing a vision of a memorial wall for homicide victims to life on a building in the Nicetown-Tioga neighborhood of North Philadelphia. Called the “Rest in Peace Memorial Wall,” the memorial features a mural listing all 406 names of the homicide victims from that year; and

WHEREAS, Ta’Bon often wears an orange prison suit, making him easily recognizable throughout the City. Using the name O.G. Law - “G Law” stands for “God’s Love at Work” - he has made it his life’s mission to divert youth from prison and premature death; and

WHEREAS, Ta’Bon travels throughout Philadelphia and to other locations in the United States with a mobile replica prison cell. Each year, he spends a month living in the cell as part of a “Deathfast.” During this time of living on the street, he shares his story and helps others who need guidance; and

WHEREAS, Ta’Bon is also an artist and performer, using music, art, and drama as mechanisms for breaking down barriers and connecting with disadvantaged youth in need. For his achievements, Ta’Bon was awarded Citizen of the Year at the 2017 Philly Hip-Hop Awards by Jimmy DaSaint and Councilman David Oh; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, Ta’Bon was the subject of a documentary by Andrew Michael Ellis and MediaStorm entitled, “Fight Hate With Love.” The documentary was a finalist for the Tim Hetherington Trust’s Visionary Award and made its North American debut at the Cleveland International Film Festival; and

WHEREAS, The documentary has also been screened at the Philadelphia Film Society’s Philly Film Showcase. Mr. Ta’Bon also has acting credits in “The Cage,” an award-winning short film by Philadelphia’s Neighborhood Film Company; and

WHEREAS, Ta’Bon will also have a role in the upcoming Netflix Original film, “Concrete Cowboy.” The film stars Idris Elba and highlights the unique urban horse-riding tradition of North Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Operating in the heart of disadvantaged neighborhoods, Michael “OG Law” Ta’Bon has been a voice for the forgotten, offering the stories and lessons of his past as a reminder to live for greater purposes; and

WHEREAS, Community heroes like Ta’Bon often do not get the recognition they deserve for changing lives on the ground and work without proper funding or infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Michael “O.G. Law” Ta’Bon has selflessly devoted his life to challenging Philadelphians to substitute anger and vengeance for peace and community. His vital work will continue to lift up those in need for years to come; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby recognizes and honors Philadelphia artist, musician, and anti-violence activist Michael “O.G. Law” Ta’Bon for his 15 years of work and advocacy on behalf of returning citizens, victims of crime, and disadvantaged youth in Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Michael Ta’Bon, further evidencing the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.