

Legislation Text

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Recognizing the Women's March on Philadelphia during Women's History Month 2021 and the organizers who hosted 4 consecutive marches from 2017-2020.

WHEREAS, On January 21, 2017, The Women's March began as the largest single-day protest in U.S. history. Over the next three years, it blossomed into a network 1.2 million strong of women, femmes, and allies across the nation working together to create a new future for this country, one where all free, equal, and safe; and

WHEREAS, The mission of The Women's March was to harness the political power of diverse women and their communities to create transformative social change. As a women-led movement, it provided intersectional education on a diverse range of issues and created entry points for new grassroots activists & organizers to engage in their local communities through trainings, outreach programs and events; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania House of Representatives recognized the efforts of the Women's March by enacting House Resolution No. 862 during the May 2018 session sponsored by State Representatives Donna Bullock, Joanna McClinton, and Brian Kendall Sims; and

WHEREAS, Governor Wolf deemed January 21st as Women's March Day in 2019 both recognizing the original Women's March of Philadelphia and its organizers; and

WHEREAS, The tireless work and effort of the Philly Women's March board members brought the International protest to our home City of Philadelphia. Those board members include Nikki Bagby, Beth Finn, Amy Martin, Deja Alvarez, Laura Arblaster Zangrilli, Allie Artur, Salima Suswell, Serita Lewis, Bridget Gill, and Vicki Landers; and

WHEREAS, Nikki Bagby is the President/Founder of A Humbled Heart, Incorporated, a consultant firm specializing in community health strategy, public relations, and talent casting. She departed her corporate role as regional marketing manager after more than 12 years, serving the largest health insurance company as a leader in the public healthcare field. She has also been featured in several television, radio, print, and online news media platforms as an expert panelist for several community and health related events and seminars. Nikki is a licensed Pastor and Missionary. She is also an influencer, community activist, and advocate and has been awarded many honors for her extensive community service. She is currently a board member of Philly Women Rally, the organizers of the Women's March on Philadelphia. She also serves as a member of the Black Brotherly Love Leadership Council, KOGIAH leadership ministry, Black Women's Leadership Council of Philadelphia, and the School District of Philadelphia School Health Advisory Committee. She has previously served on the boards of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia's Community Advisory Board, Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia, Faith in God Family Restoration Corporation, UnitedHealthcare of PA, UnitedHealthcare Southeastern PA Pharmacy & Therapeutics Committee, Philadelphia City wide NAC Alliance, Edward T Steel School's Improvement Team, and held office as a Home and School President, and The Philadelphia Mural Arts Advisory Committee, to name some of Nikki's leadership roles; and

WHEREAS, Deja Lynn Alvarez is an award-winning transgender advocate and activist with a long history of

representing and serving LGBTQ communities in Philadelphia. She is the first Transwoman in the state of Pennsylvania to run for public office. In 2019, Ms. Alvarez ran for City Council at Large where she placed in the top 10 of 30 candidates. Deja currently works in Public Health and Politics as the Director of Community Engagement for World Healthcare Infrastructures and the LGBTQ+ Care Coordinator for the Department of Public Health Ambulatory Health Services. Deja has served in leadership roles for several local organizations, including Mayor Kenney's Commission of LGBT Affairs and the Philadelphia Office of LGBT Affairs, board of directors for Liberty City Democrats, former co-Chair of the annual Trans March in Philadelphia, and cofounder and director of the first LGBTQ specific shelter and recovery facility The LGBTQ Home for HOPE. She is currently the co-President of The Women's March on Philadelphia, on the Board of Directors of The William Way Community Center, Chairwoman of the Philadelphia Police Liaison Committee, and Chairwoman for International Trans Day of Remembrance. She is one of the founding members of the Trans Wellness Program at the Mazzone Center, a co-founder and former facilitator of Sisterly Love (a Trans support and skill-building program by and for transgender women), and a former coordinator for the Trans Information Project of GALAEI. In recognition of her leadership and dedication to Philly's LGBTQ communities, Ms. Alvarez has won several awards. Deja's awards and accolades include: the 2018 Community Playmaker Award from the Philadelphia Flyers and Walmart, the 2017 Founders Award from the Men of All Colors, the 2016 Community Hero Award from the Delaware Valley Legacy Fund (DVLf), the 2016 LGBTQ Person of the Year Award from the Philadelphia Gay News (PGN), the 2015 Jaci Adams Outproud Transgender Award from Philly Pride, and the 2014 Community Advocacy Award from the I am Human Campaign; and

WHEREAS, Laura Arblaster has spent her entire career in education. Her experiences range from teaching middle school to training bedside in the cardiac unit at CHOP. In addition to instructing students, she has utilized her skills to inform district and government officials (both state and federal) on how to establish a college and career readiness culture. She found her home in the higher education publishing industry, where she has spent many years working with colleges and universities nationwide. Laura's passions remain, always improving the education system, women's rights, and the rights of refugees and immigrants. As a founding Board Member of Philly Women Rally, she led the Programming Committee for all four years of the Women's March on Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Amy Martin is a proud mother of two daughters and lives every day as a Multiple Sclerosis warrior. Amy is an entrepreneur and owner of a small, creative business. Amy is a retired Executive Chef with over 20 years' experience in the restaurant industry. Amy has been involved in social activism for many years with her family's non-profit, Rubye's Kids Inc., that has served impoverished children in Philadelphia for 27 years. Amy is the founder and director of Abington for Peace, a local Abington, PA grassroots activist group that has organized vigils and rallies, following the events in Charlottesville, around gun violence, especially pertaining to school shootings and in support of Black Lives Matter. Amy is a Committee Member for her ward and was honored by the Abington Rockledge Democratic Committee with the award for Outstanding Community Leader of 2017. Amy is the co-President and a founding member of the Women's March on Philadelphia. She has spearheaded the committees for grassroots fundraising, community outreach, and logistics and is the social media coordinator; and

WHEREAS, Vicki Landers is disabled, a queer woman, and the Founder and CEO of Disability Pride Philadelphia Inc., an organization promoting more visibility and cultivating the pride felt within our community as we advocate for an inclusive world. Through her leadership, DPP Inc. hosts fun, accessible, and inclusive events, such as Disability Pride Philadelphia, for the past 8 years and the last year's move to an online event, Disability Pride Virtual PA. Prior to DPP Inc., Vicki spent 5 years as an owner/operator of Independence EDGE Studio in Philadelphia, an accessible artist studio. She serves as Project Manager of Disability Equality in Education, an organization working on ending the stigma around disability in K-12 schools. Additionally, she is

on the Advisory Board of the Academy of Natural Sciences and she is the Disability Pride Advisor for Ms. Wheelchair PA; and

WHEREAS, Serita Lewis is a mother of two, a youth advocate, community activist, entrepreneur, and Democratic Committee Person of the 44th Ward. After 19 years, she left her career at the Wharton School and founded Philadelphia Legacy Development (DBA UrbnSEEK), a firm that combines her passions of education, social impact, diversity, and fun to positively impact the community. Working with local non-profits, community groups, and businesses, Serita creates events and activities to educate and bring awareness to issues impacting marginalized people in her city and around the world. Ms. Lewis stepped fully into her role as an activist in February of 2018 when she and a small group of concerned citizens heeded the call to action and founded March for Our Lives Philadelphia (MFOLPhilly). Serita continues to make a positive impact in Philadelphia through her continued involvement with non-profit and community organizations across the City, such as: Global Citizen, CeaseFire PA, Mom's Bonded By Grief, Black Brotherly Love Council, The Mural Arts Program, Read by 4th, and Drexel University; and

WHEREAS, Bridget Gill is an advocate for women's rights and a vocal supporter of healthcare rights for all. Bridget currently works as an Academic Program Administrator at Drexel University. Through her 15-year career in Higher Education, she has witnessed the urgent need for improvements in the areas of college access and student mental health. As a board member, she served as a conduit to the many colleges in the Philadelphia area in order to raise awareness on women's issues and engage the younger generation. Additionally, she is a founding board member of the Colonial Area Anti-Racism and Social Equity Alliance (CAARSEA) which works with entities such as the school board and local police departments to integrate an anti-racist agenda and the support the BLM movement in Plymouth Whitemarsh township; and

WHEREAS, Salima Suswell is considered one of the nation's emerging leaders and top strategic thinkers on the local, state and national level. She is the CEO/Founder of Evolve Solutions (ES), a management consulting firm she started eleven years ago to address the racial and socio-economic disparities within the black community. ES provides, from the ground floor up, political and policy development that positively impacts community engagement outcomes. Salima is engaged in the political process regionally and nationally, where her expertise is sought out for advocacy campaigns and policy initiatives. Salima's noteworthy contributions include: her role as Director for the Philadelphia Eid Coalition, who made history by leading a successful campaign to obtain the recognition of the two Islamic (Eid) Holidays on the academic calendar for Philadelphia Public Schools; and her role as Chair of the Muslim American Host Committee for the 2016 Democratic National Convention, held in Philadelphia. Salima serves as an advisor to the Office of Governor Tom Wolf for affairs pertaining to communities of color, women, and faith. She is also the first Muslim woman appointed to the Pennsylvania Commission for Women, having been appointed by Gov. Tom Wolf in 2017. Salima has also served as an advisor to the Office of Mayor James Kenney, for issues pertaining to Muslim Philadelphians. In 2018, Salima founded the Philadelphia Ramadan & Eid Fund (PREF), a nonprofit organization which hosts the annual City Hall Iftar Dinner, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha holiday celebrations, arts and culture educational programming for youth and families, and advocacy for Muslim students. In 2019, PREF presented its inaugural Ramadan Iftar Dinner at the Please Touch Museum, and the Philadelphia Eid in the Park Festival, which unified over 15,000 community members of diverse backgrounds. Additionally, Salima serves on the Leadership Council for the Philadelphia United Negro College Fund, and in 2020, was appointed by Mayor James Kenney to the Mayor's Commission for Faith-Based and Interfaith Affairs. Salima has received distinguished honors and awards from the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, Pennsylvania State Senate, Philadelphia City Council, the Women-UP Organization, City and State Magazine, the Muslim Youth Association, The Philadelphia Public Record, The Philadelphia Inquirer, and the prestigious Faatimah Gamble Legacy Award. In November 2019, Salima was honored by The Philadelphia Inquirer as a Diversity and Inclusion Pioneer; and

WHEREAS, Beth Finn is a technology leader-by-day turned activist-by-night with a passion for leaving the world a better place than she found it. She is a self-described motivator, sky reacher, and overachiever. She started her more than 20 year technology career writing Java applets and desktop applications in C++ and now manages large technology programs for a healthcare analytics company. Initially an advocate for the brain tumor community and women and girls in STEM, her activism kicked into high gear following the 2016 Presidential election when she was one of the co-founders of the Women's March on Philadelphia. This life changing experience opened her eyes to the social and economic injustices that are rampant in America today. Beth serves as President of Pennsylvania NOW, on the Boards of Americans for Democratic Action SE PA Chapter, the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, on the Steering Committees for the Philadelphia Public Banking Coalition, and Philly for Change, an affiliate of Democracy for America. Beth lives with her partner Robert in Philadelphia just a few blocks from the Liberty Bell and loves reading everything she can get her hands on, meeting new people, and being the best aunt in the world; and

WHEREAS, Allie Artur is an experienced communications professional with a demonstrated history of working in the public relations and communications industry. She has a Bachelor of Arts in rhetoric and communication studies, as well as minors in journalism, studio art, and Spanish from the University of Richmond; and

WHEREAS, Through the past four years, the Women's March on Philadelphia drew record crowds to the Parkway, with estimates up of 60,000 people attending. Throughout that time, we have seen record-breaking elections of women, specifically women of color and LGBTQ candidates; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby recognize and honor the organizers of the Women's March on Philadelphia 2017-2020 for their tireless efforts to organize and elevate women's voices.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Nikki Bagby, further evidencing the sincere respect of this legislative body.