City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Commemorating the life and legacy of community activist Shawn W. Wilson, whose tireless advocacy against gun violence and racial injustice advanced community safety and expanded a powerful model of neighborhood engagement for former first responders and veterans in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Sergeant Shawn W. Wilson, Sr. grew up in the Nicetown-Tioga neighborhood of North Philadelphia, and was a husband, father, son, uncle, friend and a widely-beloved community leader who mobilized young people against violence in Nicetown. Shawn was also a gospel singer, first responder, Army veteran, and former police and corrections officer; and

WHEREAS, Upon his retirement from the Philadelphia Police Department, Shawn advocated to support veterans and victims of gun violence, noting the similarities of those “carrying the scars of PTSD” from being in a war zone and from gun violence in low-income Black and brown neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, Shawn’s advocacy led to the establishment of the veterans-focused non-profit organization "Vets in the Hood Inc." to battle the wounds inflicted upon the psyche of young people and veterans exposed to violence; and

WHEREAS, Vets in the Hood organizers began using word of mouth to connect veterans at a block-by-block level to hot meals, housing, workforce development, expanded access to mental health tools, and classes on financial literacy and repairing poor credit; and

WHEREAS, In July 2018, Vets in the Hood partnered with Stop the Frisk, LLC to organize the “Push for Peace and Healing” rally at Nicetown Park. The event brought together Black men and women from the Nicetown-Tioga community to discuss community safety and perform spiritual cleansing rituals “to clear out the destructive energy” that has percolated in neighborhoods plagued by gun violence; and

WHEREAS, Shawn was also the owner of Love on Purpose, LLC, an organization advocating for holistic healing through the “worship & wellness movement,” connecting young Black men and fathers to spiritual rejuvenation, providing musical therapy, and advocating for a plant-based lifestyle to improve wellness and combat congestive heart failure within the community; and

WHEREAS, During the George Floyd uprisings in the Summer of 2020, Vets in the Hood created a “bully proof” private security team that recruited former and retired first responders to serve as peacekeepers between individual community members, neighborhood businesses, and the Philadelphia Police Department; and

WHEREAS, In February 2021, Shawn Wilson was featured on the FOX 29 Philadelphia Segment, “A Dual Fight for Freedom,” where he discussed racism he experienced as a Black police officer and member of the U.S. military. In that piece, he made connections between discrimination faced by Black servicemen and first responders traced back to the era of slavery in the United States, where first responders were often overlooked for their contributions to the American Revolutionary War and Civil War; and

WHEREAS, Shawn Wilson departed this life on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at the age of 52, yet his legacy and spirit shall live in the words and deeds of the many Philadelphians whose lives he touched; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby commemorate the life and legacy of community activist Shawn W. Wilson, whose tireless advocacy against gun violence and racial injustice advanced community safety and expanded a powerful model of neighborhood engagement for former first responders and veterans in the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Vets in the Hood, Inc., as an expression of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Tonya Wilson, his loving wife, as an expression of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.

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