

Legislation Text

File #: 210256, **Version:** 0

Celebrating the Selection of Jericho Brown's Pulitzer Prize-winning collection of poems, *The Tradition*, for the 2021 "One Book, One Philadelphia" Program.

WHEREAS, Since its founding in 1891, the Free Library of Philadelphia has worked to build an enlightened community devoted to lifelong learning; and

WHEREAS, Now, in its nineteenth year, the Free Library of Philadelphia's "One Book, One Philadelphia" is a signature project of the Free Library of Philadelphia. It promotes literacy, library usage, and civic dialogue by encouraging the entire greater Philadelphia area to come together through the sharing of ideas, and the joy of reading; and

WHEREAS, This year's One Book, One Philadelphia selection is *The Tradition*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning collection of poems by renowned writer Jericho Brown; and

WHEREAS, Brown is an associate professor and the director of the creative writing program at Emory University in Atlanta, who earned a PhD from the University of Houston, an MFA from the University of New Orleans, and a BA from Dillard University. He is the recipient of fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, and the National Endowment for the Arts, and he is the winner of the Whiting Award; and

WHEREAS, Brown's first book, *Please* (2008), won the American Book Award, and his second book, *The New Testament* (2014), was named one of the best poetry books of the year by *Library Journal* and received the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award; and

WHEREAS, Brown's third collection, *The Tradition* (2019) questions why and how we've become accustomed to terror. From mass shootings to intimate partner violence to racialized violence against unarmed Black and brown people by police, *The Tradition* challenges fears and beliefs handed down through generations. These powerful poems explore experiences of Blackness, queerness, masculinity, family, spirituality, and the natural world; and

WHEREAS, Brown invites readers to experience poems like music: not searching for meaning every step of the way in the lyrics but following along and letting sound and feelings emerge. His invention of the duplex-a combination of the sonnet, the ghazal, and the blues-is an all-out exhibition of formal skill, and his lyrics move through elegy and memory with a breathless cadence; and

WHEREAS, Brown's *The Tradition* won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry and was a finalist for many awards, including the National Book Critics Circle Award. His poems have appeared in the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *New Yorker*, the *Paris Review*, *Time*, and several volumes of *The Best American Poetry* anthologies; and

WHEREAS, The official One Book, One Philadelphia public reading period lasts from January to April 2021.

Programming begins on Wednesday, April 14, with an online Kickoff Event with Jericho Brown in conversation with Philadelphia Poet Laureate, Trapeta B. Mayson; and

WHEREAS, The eight-week virtual programming season features dozens of free events for all ages, including book circles, panel discussions, film screenings, art, music, writing, and movement workshops, performances, poetry readings, and family and children's activities. Young readers will join the conversation with youth companion titles *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo (grades 5-8) and *Hey Black Child* by Useni Eugene Perkins and Bryan Collier (K-4); and

WHEREAS, Along with presenting two youth companion titles to enrich discussions with younger readers across the City, One Book, One Philadelphia offers curricula, discussion guides, and a list of recommended reading for all ages that celebrate poetry and connect with the themes in the featured book; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby celebrate the selection of Jericho Brown's *The Tradition* for the 2021 “One Book, One Philadelphia” program.