

Legislation Text

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Honoring and congratulating Im Ja Choi, founder and CEO of Penn Asian Senior Services, for her steadfast service to the local Asian American community on the occasion of her retirement.

WHEREAS, Im Ja Choi is the founder and CEO of Penn Asian Senior Services (PASSi) - the first and largest nonprofit home-health agency in Pennsylvania which focuses on the well-being of Asian American seniors with language barriers - and an active community leader in the greater Philadelphia region; and

WHEREAS, Choi was born in Seoul and immigrated to the United States after college. She worked in fields of real estate and financial services before turning her focus to healthcare after her mother became sick with cancer and struggled to find adequate home-health care; and

WHEREAS, Choi recalled being told by doctors to place her mother in a nursing home where she could receive full-time care, but leaving her alone at such a facility was antithetical to her Korean culture. "You take care of your mom and dad," said Choi. "That's in my blood"; and

WHEREAS, Choi took care of her mother's medical needs at home but soon realized she would need to hire an in-home assistant to give her mother the 24-hour care that her illness required. During her search, she struggled to find a compatible aide that spoke Korean and could prepare familiar Korean meals; and

WHEREAS, Understanding the need for more culturally competent senior health services, Choi successfully raised the capital to create her own home-health agency to serve Korean American seniors with language and cultural barriers. The small agency, originally named Korean American Senior Services of Pennsylvania (KASSP), was run out of a 500 square foot, rent-free office courtesy of Abington Memorial Hospital; and

WHEREAS, The agency expanded in 2005 to serve local Asian American seniors at-large and was renamed Penn Asian Senior Services. Today, PASSi is an expansive and vital healthcare resource in the Philadelphia region, operating out of a 30,000 square-foot facility that employs hundreds of aides who speak an array of languages including Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, Cambodian, and Vietnamese; and

WHEREAS, Choi has served as CEO and Executive Director of PASSi since its inception in 2004 and recently announced she will be retiring after nearly two decades of service; and

WHEREAS, In addition to her years of service to Asian-American seniors, Choi has been an active community and civic leader. She has worked to support women and girls as a commissioner of the Pennsylvania Commission on Women, advisory board member of the Asian American Women's Coalition of PA, board member of the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Pennsylvania, and member of the board of directors for the Laurel House, a non-profit agency serving victims of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, For her work and advocacy, Choi has received numerous civic awards including the AARP Purpose Prize, the Ellis Island Medal of Honor from the National Ethnic Coalition of Organizations (NECO), and the Excellence in Aging Service Award from the Global Aging Network (GAN). Choi was also named a

Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania by Governor Tom Corbett in 2014; and

WHEREAS, Choi's decades of work and tireless advocacy will leave a lasting legacy of service and inspire the next generation of community leaders. On the occasion of her retirement, the City of Philadelphia extends its most sincere appreciation and admiration for her years of service and visionary leadership on behalf of Asian Americans, seniors, and the greater Philadelphia community at-large; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby honors and congratulates Im Ja Choi, founder and CEO of Penn Asian Senior Services, for her steadfast service to the local Asian American community on the occasion of her retirement.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy be presented to Im Ja Choi, further evidencing the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.