Legislation Text

File #: 210708, **Version:** 0

Honoring and congratulating Philly Counts for their indispensable contribution to the 2020 Census and their service to the residents and City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Every ten years, the United States Census Bureau conducts a count of the population of the United States during a defined timeline, as mandated of the federal government by Article I, Section 2 of the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Census population data is a determining factor when allocating federal relief and recovery funds, such as how significantly increased emergency funding allocated by the federal government to address the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, Philly Counts 2020 was established in January 2019 to execute a campaign to encourage census participation; and

WHEREAS, Diverse communities and neighborhoods require focused and integrated engagement, therefore the strategy was built to support the United States Census Bureau and engage Philadelphians in the 2020 Census, with respect and close attention to historically undercounted communities; and

WHEREAS, A comprehensive, multilayered engagement plan was created to increase capacity by activating partners and volunteers while simultaneously mobilizing subcommittees and creating a community of practice for the entire network; and

WHEREAS, 19 subcommittees were established focusing on building a constituency base among community leaders and organizations that were already deeply rooted in the historically undercounted communities; and

WHEREAS, More than 70 Census Champion trainings were held across the City on September 17, 2019 for residents to become trusted messengers in their community, equipped with knowledge and the tools to accurately answer hard questions about the census; and

WHEREAS, One-on-one conversations are crucial to educate and engage community members and this was the basis of the trusted messenger program, the census champion training model, which was nationally recognized as an effective model for other cities; and

WHEREAS, Philly Counts continued conducting hundreds of Census Champion trainings in eight languages: English, Spanish, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic, Cantonese, and American Sign Language; and

WHEREAS, Training sessions were held all across the City in locations where people regularly gathered to make the experience easily accessible and comfortable for attendees; and

WHEREAS, In partnership with the Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia, the Philly Counts Action Fund was established in 2019 as a rapid response grant program designed to quickly distribute money from funders

to grantees; and

WHEREAS, Philly Counts staff and volunteers hosted door hanger canvassing in early March 2020, before a pause during the initial stay-at-home orders, after which canvassing was able to resume in July, and altogether Philly Counts coordinated with 57 partners to distribute nearly 300,000 door hangers throughout Philadelphia - nearly half of all households in Philadelphia; and

WHEREAS, Philly Counts provided a community of practice, guidance, materials and a strategic plan for all grantees to reach the common goal of a complete and accurate count; and

WHEREAS, The Philly Counts community engagement model helped make City services more accessible while also empowering residents to take action and be agents of change in their communities; and

WHEREAS, The success of Philly Counts exists only through the hard work and efforts of countless volunteers and community leaders; and

WHEREAS, This campaign and the combined efforts of hundreds of partners and local stakeholders, resulted in a more complete and accurate count that represents the ethnic and cultural diversity that makes our City so rich; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia's 5.1% increase in population from the 2010 census was the largest 10-year population gain since 1950; and

WHEREAS, It was determined that the Philly Counts network and community of practice were well-suited to address the deep distrust and concern that many of our communities have around getting vaccinated; and

WHEREAS, The Philly Counts network was redirected and has been mobilizing communities to get more Philadelphians vaccinated in our lowest vaccinated neighborhoods. Philly Counts has engaged tens of thousands of Philadelphia residents, answering questions and helping people find their nearest vaccine site; and

WHEREAS, The civic infrastructure created as part of the 2020 Census in Philadelphia has thus become about much more than just the census, with its influence impacting COVID-19 engagement, mutual aid efforts, and the 2020 General Election; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby honor and congratulate Philly Counts for their indispensable contribution to the 2020 Census and their service to the residents and City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to Philly Counts as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.

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