

## Legislation Text

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Declaring March 25, 2022 as Belarusian Heritage Day in recognition of the contributions of Belarusian-Americans in the City of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, Belarusian Americans make significant contributions to the cultural, political, religious, and business fabric of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The growing population of Belarusian Americans can be traced back to the final decades of the nineteenth century, when the first wave of immigrants from Belarus arrived to the United States; and

WHEREAS, The wave lasted until the start of World War I; many Belarusian immigrants settled in east coast cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore; and

WHEREAS, Today, over 60,000 Belarusian-born individuals call the United States home; and

WHEREAS, Belarus has undergone significant political turmoil in recent years, as President Alexander Lukashenko - often referred to as Europe's last dictator - has sought to quell opposition to his now 27 year rule; and

WHEREAS, Following what many suspect to be a fraudulent election outcome in 2020, thousands of Belarusians took to the streets in opposition to the Lukashenko regime; and

WHEREAS, The protests were a continuation of ongoing protests against the communist regime which has long violated human rights and suppressed democratic movements; and

WHEREAS, The current flag of Belarus - a vertically bisected red-and-green flag with a white-and-red ornament pattern - was adopted by President Lukashenko in 1995 to replace the traditional red-and-white flag previously adopted by the Belarusian People's Republic and Republic of Belarus; and

WHEREAS, The green, red, and white flag is a modification of the Soviet-era flag; many Belarusians are adopting the traditional red-and-white flag as a symbol of protest and opposition to the current regime; and

WHEREAS, In recognition of Belarusian heritage and the many contributions of Belarusian Americans, the Council of the City of Philadelphia authorizes the traditional red-and-white flag of Belarus to be raised and flown at full mast at City Hall on March 25, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Philadelphia stands in solidarity with Belarusians in their advocacy for democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby declares March 25, 2022 as Belarusian Heritage Day in recognition of the contributions of Belarusian-Americans in the City of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy be presented to the Association of Belarusians in America (ABA), further evidencing the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.