

Legislation Text

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Honoring and recognizing the 25th Anniversary of the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania and its success in cultivating a vibrant field of scholarship while also serving as a home for numerous generations of students with an incredible diversity of experience, fostering deep connections within our city's Asian communities, serving as a potent force in the fight against racism and shaping the conversation of what it means to be Asian American in the past and in the present.

WHEREAS, The Asian American Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania is an interdisciplinary program that contextualizes the history, experiences, and contributions of Asian immigrants and persons of Asian ancestry in North America and the diaspora, while exploring identity, combating racism, and building community; and

WHEREAS, The story of the Asian American Studies Program, which was founded after years of student protest, is one of resilience and optimism in the midst of a continuous fight for the program's stability and growth, turning proposed budget cuts in 2008 into the thriving and influential program it is today; and

WHEREAS, The Asian American Studies Program will soon add three full-time faculty and a slate of new course offerings to a vigorous program that includes a research fellowship, a speaker series, podcasts, lunch-time lectures, faculty in a wide variety of disciplines, and swelling student enrollment, and is poised to become the largest, most robust Asian American Studies program in the Ivy League and on the East coast; and

WHEREAS, The existence and growth of the Asian American Studies Program would not have been possible without the leadership, courage, and dedication of generations of students and the faculty who have guided them, including founding director Dr. Rosane Rocher, Co-Director Dr. Fariha Khan, Faculty Director Dr. David Eng, former directors Dr. Eiichiro Azuma and Dr. Josephine Park, as well as Senior Lecturer Dr. Rupa Pillai; and

WHEREAS, The Asian American Studies Program highlights the increasing visibility of Asian Americans in our city and nation, as well as the social and political issues that both shape and threaten AAPI communities, driving influential academic thought and public conversation; and

WHEREAS, Former students of the Asian American Studies Program have brought the knowledge, perspective, and sensitivities they gained through the program to a wide variety of important fields, from immigration law to medicine, from the education equity movement to filmmaking, from academia to electoral organizing, with the Program's tight-knit and active alumni network a testament to the connections it has fostered and the impact it has on students and faculty; and

WHEREAS, In a time of increasing attacks across the country against Asian American individuals and communities brought on by the racism and xenophobia rampant during the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for Asian American studies and Asian American resources has become undeniably pronounced, with the Asian American Studies Program having met this challenge, providing historical context and strategies for combatting anti-Asian violence and hate in American life and fighting to end discrimination against Asian Americans and

all other groups, while celebrating the resilience and role of Asian Americans in enacting change; and

WHEREAS, The University of Pennsylvania celebrates the Program for a quarter of a century filled with community, resilience, growth, and scholarship, we look forward to the forthcoming decades of the Asian American Studies Program and all that it will bring to the University of Pennsylvania and to our entire city; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Honors and recognizes the 25th Anniversary of the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania and its success in cultivating a vibrant field of scholarship while also serving as a home for numerous generations of students with an incredible diversity of experience, fostering deep connections within our city's Asian communities, serving as a potent force in the fight against racism and shaping the conversation of what it means to be Asian American in the past and in the present.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be presented to the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania as an expression of the admiration and respect of this legislative body.