Legislation Text

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Condemning the Union League of Philadelphia for bestowing its highest honor, the Gold Medal, upon Florida Governor Ron DeSantis.

WHEREAS, The Union League of Philadelphia was established in 1862 as a patriotic society, for the purpose of supporting the policies of President Abraham Lincoln and the Union side in the U.S. Civil war. Its motto, "*Amor Patriae Ducit,"* translates to "Love of Country Leads"; and

WHEREAS, The Gold Medal, first awarded to President Lincoln himself, is given to public figures who embody the Union League's core values: support for the Constitution and the free enterprise system, limited government, individual rights and responsibility, and support for our military and law enforcement, according to immediate past League President Craig Mills; and

WHEREAS, Gold Medal recipients over the years have included Presidents and Vice Presidents, Cabinet Secretaries, Supreme Court Justices, Senators and Governors - nearly all of whom could be described as conservative Republicans - whose sense of decency and respect for democratic ideals and the constitutional rights of all Americans were beyond reproach; and

WHEREAS, By contrast, Governor Ron DeSantis's tenure as Governor of Florida has been marked by cruelty, division, censorship, political gamesmanship, and the undermining of our democratic system - attributes that seem to run counter to the Union League's professed ideals and Gold Medal criteria; and

WHEREAS, Gov. DeSantis has banned books, censored teachers and professors, cajoled children for choosing to wear masks, and fired public health officials and a duly-elected Attorney General, limiting individual and parental freedoms under the guise of expanding them; and

WHEREAS, In addition, DeSantis spent hundreds of thousands of Florida's federally-provided COVID recovery dollars on privately chartered planes to fly South American asylum seekers from Texas to Massachusetts - an act widely viewed as a political stunt at best, and a cruel and inhumane way to treat people already in crisis at worst; and

WHEREAS, Gov. DeSantis has even created a law under which public school teachers could lose their jobs for teaching the collected writings and speeches of the esteemed abolitionist and statesman Frederick Douglass, whose portrait adorns the Union League's walls, if just one student feels guilty or ashamed for the actions of their white ancestors; and

WHEREAS, Mindful of the reputational harm that the Union League will suffer for bestowing the Gold Medal upon DeSantis, whose actions run counter to the ideals of freedom the League was founded on, a bloc of members have stated that they intend to resign en masse in disgust; and

WHEREAS, Ron DeSantis's words and actions as Governor of Florida run counter to the values of the Union League, the City of Philadelphia, the United States Constitution, and democracy itself; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Does hereby condemn the Union League of Philadelphia for bestowing its highest honor, the Gold Medal, upon Florida Governor Ron DeSantis.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an certified copy of this resolution be presented to representatives of the Union League as evidence of the sincere sentiments of this legislative body.