# Legislation Text

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Declaring March 18, 2023 “Public Defender and Participatory Defense Day” in the City of Philadelphia to honor the dedicated work that the Defender Association of Philadelphia and Participatory Defense Hubs do for Philadelphians.

WHEREAS, On March 18, 1963, the United States Supreme Court issued a landmark opinion in the case of *Gideon v. Wainwright*. Clarence Gideon was convicted and incarcerated after he was denied an attorney. He was innocent, and was released years later after the Supreme Court granted him counsel; and

WHEREAS, *Gideon v. Wainwright* established the 6th Amendment right to counsel for adults, even those who could not afford to hire an attorney. In that decision, Justice Hugo Black writing for the majority said, “in our adversary system of criminal justice, any person hauled into court, who is too poor to hire a lawyer, cannot be assured a fair trial unless counsel is provided for him.” This landmark decision also laid the foundation for the same protections to later be afforded to juveniles, in the case of *In re Gault*; and

WHEREAS, In the City of Philadelphia, public defense is handled by highly skilled Assistant Defenders in the Defender Association of Philadelphia. The Defender Association represents approximately seventy percent of individuals arrested in the city. The Court of Common Pleas and Municipal Court determine standards of indigence and make all counsel appointments; and

WHEREAS, Since its founding in 1934, the Defender Association has been instrumental in protecting the 6th Amendment and upholding the Constitutional right to an attorney. Public Defenders represent clients in adult and juvenile state courts, at civil and criminal mental health hearings, and as child advocates for children with open dependency petitions. The Defender Association’s dynamic team includes social workers, paralegals, mitigation specialists, investigators, and administrative professionals who play critical roles in protecting civil rights of indigent clients; and

WHEREAS, The Defender Association of Philadelphia is led by Chief Defender, Keisha Hudson. Chief Defender Hudson has been instrumental in steering the Defender Association following the COVID-19 Pandemic and leading the charge in improving the Association's delivery of services to its clients, achieving pay parity for Defender attorneys and staff, and refocused the Defender’s mission to be a more people-focused and inclusive organization, and

WHEREAS, The Defender Association of Philadelphia has been working to end cash bail, reform probation/parole, support and grow successful diversion programs, and empower communities to play a more active role in the criminal justice system, in an effort to fundamentally change the system to reduce racial disparities and end our over-reliance on incarceration; and

WHEREAS, Participatory Defense Hubs in the City of Philadelphia work with defendants to help them understand more about the court process and the nature of the charges against them; and

WHEREAS, These volunteer-based teams work tirelessly to help individuals understand the criminal justice

system. Participatory Defense Hubs work hand-in-hand with the Defender Association to assist indigent clients who are in need; and

WHEREAS, There are currently seven participatory defense hubs throughout the City of Philadelphia. "The Best Outcomes" Hub on Girard Avenue, the South Philadelphia Hub at Circle of Hope Church, The West Philadelphia Hub at Kingsessing Recreation Center, The Germantown Hub at Janes Memorial United Methodist Church, The Youth Art & Self-Empowerment Project (YASP), The North Philadelphia Hub at Zion Baptist Church, the Kensington Hub at Esperanza Health Center, and the West Philadelphia Haddington-Shepard Hub at the Shepard Recreation Center have played a monumental role in ensuring people are informed about the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, The Defender Association of Philadelphia and Participatory Defense Hubs throughout Philadelphia should be honored for their incredible work and the role they play in protecting and defending the 6th Amendment to the United States Constitution; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby declares March 18, 2023 "Public Defender and Participatory Defense Day" in the City of Philadelphia to honor the dedicated work that the Defender Association of Philadelphia and Participatory Defense Hubs do for Philadelphians.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution should be presented to the Defender Association of Philadelphia and to Philadelphia's Participatory Defense Hubs as a sign of the admiration and respect of this legislative body.



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