

## **RESOLUTION**

Honoring the outstanding and historic achievement of the George Washington High School Competitive Spirit Team for becoming the first team in the School District of Philadelphia to earn a spot in the National Cheerleaders Association High School Nationals Competition.

WHEREAS, The George Washington High School Competitive Spirit Team made history in September 2022 by becoming the first public school team in the School District of Philadelphia to earn a spot in the National Cheerleaders Association High School Nationals Competition, the largest cheerleading competition in the world; and

WHEREAS, Founded just six years ago, the George Washington High School Competitive Spirit Team has quickly proven itself a force to be reckoned with, achieving acclaim across the Commonwealth. Under the leadership of Coaches Michele Sorkin-Socki and Veronica Hayes, the George Washington High School Competitive Spirit Team is the three-time reigning Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association District XII Public League Champions in the Co-Ed Division and a PIAA 2022 state semifinalist in the Co-Ed Division; and

WHEREAS, The team has demonstrated excellence and determination, even as they have dealt with outdated equipment and facilities and underfunded budgets. Their success is a testament to coaching prowess and stability and to the team's investment in both trust building and team building in their pursuit of creativity and perfection against wealthier and better-resourced suburban and private school teams; and

WHEREAS, Student athletes Amore Joseph, Aaliyah Armour, Addyson Givens, Irsida Kola, Nia Rodgers, Nylah Santiago, Kianna Harper, Roland Williams, Jayla Aye, Erica Pierre, Serena Diaz, Josiah Jeudy, Sarai Jeudy, Adamaris Lopez, Aniyah Saunders, Syniah Medina, and Simone Felder exemplify the best of our young people and demonstrate what is possible when we as a city and school system invest in them as much as they believe in themselves. For these young athletes, the George Washington High School Competitive Spirit Team serves as an essential source of community, opportunity, and hope; and

WHEREAS, The George Washington High School Competitive Spirit Team, following hours of skills-training, five days a week, to develop their abilities in drills, dance, and stunting, received a bid in September 2022 to earn their spot in the NCA Nationals Competition; and

WHEREAS, Teachers like Michele Sorkin-Socki and Veronica Hayes go above and beyond in their dedication to coaching, often working 10-12 hour days and committing weekends and personal time and funds to support their student athletes. They provide safe havens and mentoring and leadership skills, and they deserve full funding for their programs and their coaching as much as they deserve our gratitude; and

WHEREAS, Afterschool and extracurricular programs, including athletics, intramurals, clubs, and other organized programs, are a critical and essential part of a young person's personal development and school experience, and ought to be funded robustly. While most school systems dedicate about one percent of their budgets to afterschool programming, the School District of Philadelphia can afford only a fraction of that amount. Excellence and inspiration, like at George Washington High School, is possible in every school and for every child when we invest in their boundless potential inside and outside of the classroom; and

WHEREAS, The inspiring story of the George Washington High School Competitive Spirit Team has won over the hearts of the entire City of Philadelphia, helping them exceed their fundraising efforts for the competition. Their achievement on and off the cheer stage, school spirit, hard work, and enthusiasm brings positivity and joy to our entire city at a time when we need it the most; and

WHEREAS, The George Washington High School Competitive Spirit Team embodies resilience and perseverance, and will represent the very best of the City of Philadelphia at the Nationals Competition in Dallas, Texas, from January 21-22, 2023. The entire City of Philadelphia and our City Council sends these young student athletes, their coaches, their families, and the entire George Washington High School community our gratitude and our best wishes on their continued success. They are truly our city's national champions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Council of the City of Philadelphia honors the outstanding and historic achievement of the George Washington High School Competitive Spirit Team for becoming the first team in the School District of Philadelphia to earn a spot in the National Cheerleaders Association High School Nationals Competition; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, That an Engrossed copy be presented to Coaches Michele Sorkin-Socki and Veronica Hayes, further evidencing the sincere respect and admiration of this legislative body.

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INTRODUCED BY:

Helen Gym, Brian O'Neill

CO-SPONSORED BY:

Mark Squilla, Michael Driscoll, Katherine Gilmore Richardson