RESOLUTION

Recognizing April 6, 2021 as National Library Workers Day to honor the commitment of library workers and the unique services they provide to local communities; and to support greater compensation and equality in libraries.

WHEREAS, The United States has about 116,867 public and academic libraries, and 17,000 public libraries. As of 2017, there were about 194,000 librarians, 40,000 library technicians, and 96,000 library assistants working in these libraries across the country. Libraries are an accessible safe space that provide free educational resources and other services for all members of the community, including children, teenagers, people experiencing homelessness, and English language learners; and

WHEREAS, Library workers help offer resources to further the literacy and learning of millions of children and adults, providing books and other resources to about 1.3 billion people every year. These resources are critical to being successful in K-12 and higher educational settings, and contribute to the acceptance of students into higher education programs; and

WHEREAS, About 78% of Americans believe that libraries are a reliable place to go to find needed information and resources. About 65% of Americans believe that libraries offer the proper educational resources and guidance to contribute to their personal growth. Nearly two-thirds of Americans believe that the loss of local public libraries would greatly impact their community; and

WHEREAS, The theme of National Library Week 2021, which is taking place April 4-10, 2021, is “Welcome to Your Library.” This theme focuses on how libraries and library workers are an integral part of the community. The knowledge and resources found in a library with the help of library staff goes beyond the books and the building itself, and ultimately uplifts the community; and

WHEREAS, On National Library Workers Day, community members can nominate library workers as Stars for the American Library Association’s “Galaxy of Stars;” and

WHEREAS, During National Library Week, the American Library Association encourages community members to support increased pay for library workers and the fundamental resources they provide to local communities; and

WHEREAS, In 2020, the Concerned Black Employees of the Free Library of Philadelphia called for change in the The Free Library of Philadelphia system. Black employees demanded equal pay and raised awareness of racial discrimination and bias working in Philadelphia libraries. Out

of the 460 librarians working for the Philadelphia Free Library system in 2019, three-quarters were Black workers. In 2018, about 86% of library workers of color in the Philadelphia library system experienced bias and 83% experienced racism. According to a letter written by the Concerned Black Workers of the Free Library of Philadelphia, Black library staffers are largely hired for nonprofessional positions, including custodians, municipal guards, and library assistants. As a result they earn $7,533 less than the median salary in the library system, while white employees earn $12,012 more than the median; and

WHEREAS, While the immense services Philadelphia library workers offer greatly benefits our city, the compensation they receive is not always enough to promote their own economic growth. We must also ensure that all Philadelphia library workers are treated fairly, respectfully, and equitably regardless of their background; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF PHILADELPHIA , Hereby recognizes April 6, 2021 as National Library Workers Day to honor the commitment of library workers and the unique services they provide to local communities; and to support greater compensation and equality in libraries.

Sponsored by: Councilmember Bass
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