

RESOLUTION

Honoring the Forty-Ninth Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris, for her distinguished career and accomplishments, on the occasion of Women's History Month

WHEREAS, Vice President Kamala D. Harris was born in Oakland, California to parents who emigrated from India and Jamaica. Vice President Harris grew up believing in the promise of America and fighting to make sure that promise is fulfilled for all Americans; and

WHEREAS, Vice President Harris and her sister, Maya Harris, were primarily raised and inspired by their mother, Shyamala Gopalan. Gopalan, a breast cancer scientist and pioneer in her own right, received her doctorate the same year Vice President Harris was born. Vice President Harris often speaks of what her mother told her growing up “Don’t sit around and complain about things, do something;” and

WHEREAS, Vice President Harris’ parents were activists, instilling her with a strong sense of justice. They brought her to civil rights demonstrations and introduced role models—ranging from Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall to civil rights leader Constance Baker Motley—whose work motivated her to become a prosecutor; and

WHEREAS, Vice President Harris earned a bachelor’s degree from Howard University, where she became a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, and a law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of Law; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, Vice President Harris joined the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office where she specialized in prosecuting child sexual assault cases. She then served as a managing attorney in the San Francisco District Attorney’s Office and later became chief of the Division on Children and Families for the San Francisco City Attorney’s Office; and

WHEREAS, Vice President Harris was elected District Attorney of San Francisco in 2003, the first person of color elected to that role. As District Attorney, Vice President Harris created a ground-breaking program to provide first-time drug offenders with the opportunity to earn a high school degree and find employment. The program was designated as a national model of innovation for law enforcement by the United States Department of Justice; and

WHEREAS, In 2010, Vice President Harris was elected California’s Attorney General, the first woman, first Black American, and first South Asian American to hold that role. As Attorney General, she oversaw the largest state justice department in the United States. In this capacity, she managed a \$735 million budget and oversaw more than 4,800 attorneys and other employees. Notably, in this role she established the state’s first Bureau of Children’s Justice and instituted several first-of-their-kind reforms that ensured greater transparency and accountability in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, As Attorney General, Vice President Harris won a \$20 billion settlement for Californians whose homes had been foreclosed on, as well as a \$1.1 billion settlement for students and veterans who were taken advantage of by a for-profit education company. She defended the Affordable Care Act in court, enforced environmental law, and was a national

leader in the movement for marriage equality, where her refusal to defend Proposition 8 (2008), which banned same-sex marriage in the state, helped lead to it being overturned in 2013; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, Vice President Harris was sworn into the United States Senate, the second Black woman and the first South Asian American to ever be elected to the Senate. In her first speech, she spoke out on behalf of immigrants and refugees who were then under attack. As a member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, she fought for better protections for DREAMers and called for better oversight of substandard conditions at immigrant detention facilities; and

WHEREAS, As a Senator, Vice President Harris championed legislation to reform cash bail, combat hunger, provide rent relief, improve maternal health care, increase the minimum wage to \$15, and address the climate crisis as a member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. Her bipartisan anti-lynching bill passed the Senate in 2018. Her legislation to preserve Historically Black Colleges and Universities was signed into law, as was her effort to infuse much-needed capital into low-income communities during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, On the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, she worked with members of both parties to keep the American people safe from foreign threats and crafted bipartisan legislation to assist in securing American elections. Additionally, she became known for her prosecutorial style of questioning witnesses during hearings, and drew particular attention for her questions to U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who was testifying before the intelligence committee on alleged Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election; and

WHEREAS, Vice President Harris also served on the Senate Judiciary Committee, where she participated in hearings for two Supreme Court nominees; and

WHEREAS, On matters of racial discrimination in policing and use of force, Vice President Harris has called for the rooting out of racial discrimination. In the aftermath of George Floyd's death in police custody in 2020, she participated in protests in Washington, D.C. After the shooting of Jacob Blake, she met with Blake's family in Wisconsin and spoke with Blake over the phone. She also told NBC News, "I think that there should be a thorough investigation, and based on what I've seen, it seems that the officer should be charged;" and

WHEREAS, Vice President Harris has called for economic and educational investment in communities of color to create safer, healthier communities. She and President Biden have called for an end to no-knock warrants, chokeholds, and carotid holds. They want to create a national excessive force standard and a database to track police officers who use excessive force and break the rules. They also want to end cash bail and private prisons; and

WHEREAS, Vice President Harris is the author of a memoir, "The Truths We Hold: An American Journey," and a children's book, "Superheroes Are Everywhere." She also co-authored the book "Smart on Crime," which has been considered a model for dealing with the problem of criminal recidivism; and

WHEREAS, On August 11, 2020, Vice President Harris accepted President Joe Biden's invitation to become his running mate and help unite the nation. She is the first woman, the first Black American, and the first South Asian American to be elected Vice President; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby recognize and honor the distinguished career and accomplishments of Vice President Kamala Harris on the occasion of Women's History Month.

**Katherine Gilmore Richardson
Councilmember At-Large
March 18, 2021**

Co-Sponsors: The Women of Council (Councilmember Quiñones Sánchez, Councilmember Bass, Councilmember Gym, Councilmember Parker, Councilmember Gauthier, Councilmember Brooks)