

RESOLUTION

Authorizing the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to hold a hearing to examine the exclusion of the Israeli food truck Moshava from a subsequently cancelled cultural fair in Philadelphia, to raise awareness of a recent rise in anti-Semitism, and to discuss best practices for organizations and cultural event planners facing similar situations in the future.

WHEREAS, An event called A Taste of Home was scheduled for Sunday June 20th, 2021 in Philadelphia and meant to be a curated event celebrating diversity through food, art, entertainment, and community. The event was organized by local nonprofits Eat Up the Borders and Sunflower Philly and characterized as a tribute to the many owners and chef's journey from their homelands and a celebration and sharing of their cultures with others; and

WHEREAS, On Saturday, Moshava, a food truck serving Israeli food, announced on social media that it had been disinvited from participating in A Taste of Home due to threats received by the organizers of the event regarding the truck's presence; and

WHEREAS, Sunflower Philly subsequently announced the cancelation of the entire event on Sunday citing threats of protests and potential aggressions. They also noted that past events have required the presence of both Israeli and Palestinian vendors and because that was not possible on Sunday, Moshava was asked not to attend; and

WHEREAS, Moshava stated that it does not believe in this specific instance the decision of the organizers was rooted in anti-Semitism. But regardless of the motivations, an Israeli vendor was excluded from a public event at a moment where anti-Semitic incidents have been on the rise in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Threats to the safety of this event based on the presence of an Israeli food truck are anti-Semitic. Defined by the State Department, anti-Semitism arises when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews. Anti-Semitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries; and

WHEREAS, In 2019, the Anti Defamation League reported more hate crimes against Jews than any other year since it began tracking the numbers in 1979. Anti-Semitic hate crimes were again much higher than normal in 2020 and are on track for a similar pattern in 2021. When we consider that Moshava and the festival itself were threatened for an Israeli food truck's participation in the festival, the broader context of violence against Jews is essential context; and

WHEREAS, The mishandling of concerns of protest and aggression by organizers of the A Taste of Home event, in addition to mismanaged communications with Moshava, the other participants of the event and the public highlights the need to discuss and present new best practices for these types of cultural events. Potential violence against other groups based on race, religion, culture and sexual orientation have become more common and present a real threat to the fun and vibrant events Philadelphia is known for and enjoys each year; and

WHEREAS, This hearing must also examine best practices for event organizers and vendors, including the City, when faced with threats of violence or anticipating protest activity. Coordination with City agencies, the Police Department, and anti-discrimination bodies like the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations, and other relevant experts is essential and their expertise should be drawn upon for the future; and

WHEREAS, The Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations has agreed to do a full review of this specific situation. Their input on this incident and how to best handle others like it that arise will be helpful for providing guidance to event organizers and vendors; and

WHEREAS, In order to ensure a safe and pleasant environment for all citizens at our community events, we must develop recommendations for handling any situations like this exclusion of Moshava for future events; now

Therefore be it **RESOLVED** that the City Council of Philadelphia hereby authorizes the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development to hold a hearing to examine the exclusion of the Israeli food truck Moshava from a subsequently cancelled cultural fair in Philadelphia, and to raise awareness of a recent rise in anti-Semitism, and to discuss best practices for organizations and cultural event planners facing similar situations in the future.

Introduced by CM Domb

Co-sponsored by CM Squilla