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TO: Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David D. Whitaker 
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: November 8, 2019

RE: **RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING NOVEMBER 20, AS THE
TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE**

On November 5, 2019 the Honorable Council Member Raquel Castañeda-López requested that the Legislative Policy Division draft a resolution recognizing November 20, in this year, 2019, and every year, henceforth as the Transgender Day of Remembrance.

Attached, please find our draft of the resolution.

Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

BY COUNCIL MEMBER RAQUEL CASTAÑEDA-LÓPEZ

RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING NOVEMBER 20, AS THE TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

WHEREAS, The mission of the Detroit City Council is to promote the economic, cultural and physical welfare of Detroit's citizens through Charter-mandated legislative functions; and

WHEREAS, Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) is an annual observance that honors the memory of the transgender people whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence that year; and

WHEREAS, Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) was started in 1999 by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith, as a vigil to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998. The vigil commemorated all the transgender people lost to violence since Rita Hester's death, and began an important tradition that has become the annual Transgender Day of Remembrance; and

WHEREAS, Across the United States, anti-transgender stigma and systemic discrimination heighten the vulnerability of transgender people from an early age. For transgender women of color, who comprise the vast majority of victims, these challenges are further exacerbated by and intertwined with racism and sexism; and

WHEREAS, Almost half of all transgender people in the United States will attempt suicide at one point in their lifetime, a rate that is eight times higher than the rest of the United States population; and

WHEREAS, The United States has one of the highest rates of murder of transgender people, and this ugly reality occurs in our city. According to the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) reported on June 7, 2019, in the online article titled "*Horrible Anti- LGBTQ Killings in Detroit Demand Action*":

- On May 25, 2019 Paris Cameron, 20, a Black transgender woman, was among three people killed in a horrific anti-LGBTQ shooting in a home in Detroit.
- On December 7, 2018 Keanna Mattel, 35, a Black transgender woman, was fatally shot in Detroit. In 2015, Ms. Mattel, who also went by the name Kelly Stough, spoke against the anti-trans violence, explaining that "police are unaware with our struggle so they have no sympathy for us." Ms. Mattel's friends remember her as "a sweetheart and beautiful character."

WHEREAS, There is significant incidence of misgendering or misnaming transgender victims of crime in police reports, indicating that the number of victims of violence and murder is likely far higher than what is officially reported, and local law enforcement is not required to, and frequently fails to report hate crimes, including murder, specific to the LGBTQ community; and

WHEREAS, Congress and the executive branch must act to protect and preserve the lives of all minorities through inclusive legislation. It is noteworthy to point out the foresight and success of the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office for implementing a policy that will respect the humanity of transgender people; and

WHEREAS, Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy in association with Fair Michigan – a Michigan nonprofit corporation seeking to end discrimination against persons based on sex, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity – announced the issuance of the Transgender Interaction Policy on November 3, 2016; and

WHEREAS, The Transgender Interaction Policy, the first in the state, mandates employees in the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office to acknowledge transgender, intersex and gender-nonconforming individuals in a manner appropriate to the individual's gender identity, which may be different from the sex the individual was assigned at birth or listed on official identification documents; and

WHEREAS, That the Detroit City Council acknowledges the health of any community is predicated on protecting the most vulnerable, and in doing so, supports this year's Transgender Day of Remembrance, on November 20th ; and

WHEREAS, Transgender Day of Remembrance is an important reminder for all to focus on preventing anti-transgender violence in our community. **THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED, That the Detroit City Council:

1. Recognizes and supports the goals and principles of Transgender Day of Remembrance; and
2. Applauds the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office Transgender Interaction Policy
3. Supports an increase in the amount and accuracy of Federal collection and reporting data for violence against transgender people; and
4. Calls on the Federal and state governments to study, respond to and prevent violence against transgender people. **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED, That the City Council hereby designates November 20th , in this year, 2019, and every year, henceforth as the Transgender Day of Remembrance in the City of Detroit. **BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be forwarded to the offices of the City Clerk, the Mayor, the Detroit delegation in the Michigan legislature and the United States Congressional delegations from Michigan.