

BY HONORABLE COUNCIL PRESIDENT BRENDA JONES

RESOLUTION TO CREATE THE OFFICE OF DISABILITY AFFAIRS

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, The City of Detroit is changing. Within the last few years the city's landscape has changed to include numerous large and small scale economic developments along with both private and public initiatives designed to incite not only energy but also to increase the population density within the neighborhoods across the City; and

WHEREAS, Curiously, however, the unique needs of the disabled community are not fully addressed with the needs of the general population. It is imperative that this fact be acknowledge so that the rights and needs of the disabled community can be fully integrated into our revitalizing efforts across the city; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations estimates that by 2050 the disabled community worldwide will reach 940 million people, or 15% of what will be roughly 6.25 billion total urban dwellers; lending an urgency for municipalities to address the needs of the disabled community in all facets of civic life; and

WHEREAS, Although, the vision of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is to improve the rights and access of it's targets, the reality on the ground is very different. For those who have mobility issues; barriers can be, the lack of access (ramping, power door openers, accessible restrooms, crumbling sidewalks), accessible housing, sensitivity training, emergency preparedness, to name a few. For those with a cognitive disability, those on the autistic spectrum, hearing impaired/deaf, blind/visually impaired, the urban environment can be a sensory minefield; and

WHEREAS, the creation of an adequately funded City of Detroit's Office of Disability Affairs, staffed with qualified individuals with disabilities and those with learned experience, will increase attention in service delivery to this community by creating this singularly focused city department; which will work with the Department of Public Works and other departments as appropriate; to concentrate on the unique needs of the Disability Community; and

WHEREAS, The Office of Disability Affairs would monitor state compliance with the Americans with Disability Act and to advise the Mayor, the Michigan Legislature and Governor on the needs of individuals with disabilities in Detroit. The Office of Disability Affairs will also be charged with assisting the State of Michigan Disability Resources department with the resolution of state disabilities issues and provide education, communication, and networking services concerning disability issues and needs for Detroit residents. **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT**

RESOLVED, That the Detroit City Council strongly urges the Mayor to create and appropriately fund the Office of Disability Affairs & Advocacy.