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TO: Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director
Legislative Policy Division 

DATE: October 17, 2022

RE: Resolution to proclaim November as Family Court Awareness Month

City Council President Mary Sheffield has requested the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) to produce a resolution proclaiming the month of November as Family Court Awareness Month.

Attached is the requested resolution. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

A RESOLUTION BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT MARY SHEFFIELD

Proclaiming the month of November as Family Court Awareness Month

- WHEREAS** Ms. Tina Swithin became an advocate for change in the Family Court System after enduring a ten-year high conflict custody battle and seeing the flaws in the system firsthand, recognizing the need to shine a spotlight on systemic issues that are placing children in harm’s way; and
- WHEREAS** In 2020, Ms. Tina Swithin in collaboration with Sandra Ross of The California Protective Parents Association, founded, “Family Court Awareness Month”; and
- WHEREAS** In its inaugural year, the Family Court Awareness Month Committee (FCAMC) memorialized the initiative with a cross-country tour that started in California and ended in North Carolina, receiving support from various domestic violence advocates, law enforcement officers, district attorneys, attorneys, and judges; and
- WHEREAS** The mission of the FCAMC is to increase awareness on the importance of education and training on domestic violence, childhood trauma and post separation abuse for all professionals working within the family court system; and
- WHEREAS** When an abusive relationship ends, and children are involved, the abuse often escalates and transitions into the family court system, children are often used as pawns and weaponized by the abusive, unhealthy parent; and
- WHEREAS** The mission of the FCAMC is to increase awareness on the importance of using scientifically valid, evidence-based, treatment programs and services that are proven in terms of safety, effectiveness, and therapeutic value; and
- WHEREAS** The mission at the FCAMC is to educate judges and other family court professionals on the empirical data and peer-reviewed research that is currently available, for such research is a critical component to making decisions that are truly in the best interest of children. This research includes The Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) study; (CDC-Kaiser Permanente), Sauner’s Study (US Department of Justice), The Meier Study: Child Custody Outcomes in Cases Involving Abuse Allegations (Joan Meier), and the Santa Clara Law Study; (Confronting the Challenge of High-Conflict Personality in Family Court); and
- WHEREAS** The mission at FCAMC is fueled by the desire to create awareness and change in the family court system for the conservatively estimated, 58,000 children a year ordered into unsupervised contact with abusive parents, while honoring the over

800 children who have been murdered since 2008 by a parent in an estranged relationship; (Source: Center for Judicial Excellence) **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT,**

RESOLVED The Detroit City Council unequivocally supports the FCAMC in its mission of serving the community by increasing awareness on the importance of a family court system that promotes child safety and encourages decisions that are in the best interest of children **NOW, BE IT FURTHER,**

RESOLVED The Detroit City Council through Council President Mary Sheffield, proclaims the month of November as Family Court Awareness Month.