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TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director 
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: January 5, 2023

RE: **RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS-PROTECTIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO SOLVE DETROIT'S EVICTION CRISIS**

Council President Mary Sheffield requested that the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) draft a RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS-PROTECTIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO SOLVE DETROIT'S EVICTION CRISIS.

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

BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT MARY SHEFFIELD

RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS-PROTECTIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO SOLVE DETROIT'S EVICTION CRISIS

- WHEREAS,** The mission of the Detroit City Council is to promote the economic, cultural and physical welfare of Detroit’s citizens and residents through Charter-mandated legislative functions; and
- WHEREAS,** Detroiters experienced a significant number of evictions, even before the COVID 19 pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, eviction cases averaged over 30,000 per year. Detroit has experienced more eviction cases than New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago and even the entire state of New Jersey; and
- WHEREAS,** Under 5% of people facing eviction had legal representation and landlords and corporations who were filing cases had access to legal representation over 94% of the time; and
- WHEREAS,** Evictions increase poverty, disrupt education, causes mental health issues, and accelerates the cycle of homelessness in Detroit. These evictions harm individuals and families especially seniors, people with disabilities and households headed by Black women with young children; and
- WHEREAS,** According to a recent study by the University of Michigan,¹ “At the current filing rate, 21% of Detroit renters...61,000 tenants... will face the threat of eviction this year.” This data is absolutely shocking and illustrates the enormity of the problem that a significant segment of our residents are facing. The eviction problem in Detroit has reached epidemic proportions, and it requires immediate and effective action from all levels of government; and
- WHEREAS,** To address the crisis, the Detroit City Council in 2022, established the Detroit Right to Counsel Ordinance, to provide full legal representation and robust community outreach and engagement to Detroiters facing eviction. The Detroit City Council strongly urges Mayor Duggan to immediately fund the implementation of this ordinance using all available resources to ensure all eligible Detroit residents will receive the benefit of full legal representation under this ordinance. In addition, the Council urges the Mayor to petition the Governor and the State legislature for additional funds for the Detroit Right to Counsel Ordinance; and
- WHEREAS,** The Council also urges the Mayor to petition the Governor and the State legislature for additional funds for temporary housing for the individuals and families that may be evicted, and for additional affordable housing in the city of Detroit. Evictions disproportionately impact black female-headed households with children. An eviction should not move renters into housing that is unfit for human habitation or force people into homelessness. Housing assistance falls short of the need, given the fact that only one in five renter households who qualify for renter assistance receives help, thereby highlighting the need for affordable housing; and

¹ » [Detroit eviction filings on track to return to pre-pandemic level as COVID-19 protections expire \(umich.edu\)](#)

WHEREAS, Detroit's overwhelming and intense crisis of affordable housing calls for immediate actions and policies that effectively support and protect the human right to shelter. In addition, there is also a need to determine a source of funding to assist landlords in Detroit to repair their historically affordable properties to meet the standards set out under Detroit's Property Maintenance Code (abating lead and asbestos, etc.), so as to allow them to continue to charge affordable rents; and

WHEREAS, Detroiters' human rights depend on adequate, affordable housing for all, but our current systems and laws governing housing have long failed to ameliorate the crisis. It is time for more effective policies; **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED, The Detroit City Council calls for the City of Detroit to immediately address the eviction crisis in Detroit and urges the Mayor to have the City's Law Department, the City's Housing Revitalization Department (HRD) and the City's Federal and Lansing Lobbyists, to coordinate and to develop an all encompassing strategy to address this crisis that is now reaching epidemic proportions; **THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be forwarded to Mayor Mike Duggan, Conrad Mallet, the City's Corporation Counsel, Donald Rencher, the City's Chief of Services and Infrastructure, Julie Schneider, the City's HRD Director and the City's Federal and Lansing Lobbyists.