

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, earlier this year President Trump’s White House announced a zero tolerance immigration policy that has the effect of separating parents from their children at the border in order to criminally prosecute those parents; and

WHEREAS, according to the Pew Research Center, half of all federal criminal arrests across the country are for immigration related offenses, which results in the mass incarceration of immigrants that disproportionately impacts Latinos and results in no measurable deterrent on unauthorized migration; and

WHEREAS, from October 2016 through February 2018 nearly 4,000 official separations of immigrant children from their families occurred across the country; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) has said that 1,995 children have been taken from their families in the first six weeks after Trump’s Zero Tolerance Policy went into effect (April 19 to May 31, 2018), and federal officials acknowledge that the number may be even higher; and

WHEREAS, Federal Public Defenders say that between May 21 and June 5, 2018, in McAllen, Texas, 415 children were separated from their mothers and/or fathers; and

WHEREAS, separating children from their families or incarcerating children can cause mental and physical injury to both the child and the parent; and

WHEREAS, Marco Antonio Muñoz committed suicide in Granjeno, Texas after federal agents forcibly separated him from his three-year-old child and his wife; and

WHEREAS, lawyers working with immigrants reported that a breastfeeding baby was taken from an immigrant mother and, although DHS denies separating babies from adults, officials declined to specify an age at which they would not separate immigrant children from parents; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Homeland Security has not responded to requests to provide a breakdown of the age of children separated from their parents and held in custody; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has not put in place protocols to keep track of parents, children, or siblings concurrently; for keeping parents and children in contact with each other while separated; or for eventually reuniting them; and

WHEREAS, President Trump issued an Executive Order on June 20, 2018 which failed to repeal the immoral and un-American zero tolerance policy and will result in the mass incarceration of immigrant children; and

WHEREAS, prosecuting and detaining people who seek asylum, refugee, or economic freedom goes against our moral fiber; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is committed to being the most family-friendly city in the country and will ensure that its policies and decisions support and enhance the quality of life for Austin's families and children; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has long embraced and welcomed individuals of diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and national backgrounds, including a large immigrant population; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin is the largest refugee resettlement site in Central Texas and there are currently about 57,000 Austin residents eligible for citizenship; and

WHEREAS, the City Council declared Austin a Welcoming City through Resolution No. 20140320-049 to celebrate the contributions of members of the immigrant community and demonstrate that the City strives to include and support immigrants in all aspects of our city; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has fought to protect the rights of immigrants through: Resolution No. 20170518-045, which directed the City Manager to pursue litigation to fight state and federal anti-immigrant policies; Resolution No. 20161215-066, which provided funding for immigrant legal services; and expanding funding for immigrant legal services on February 16, 2017 (item 18 of council agenda); and

WHEREAS, the Austin Commission on Immigrant Affairs recommended that the city fund a Welcoming Cities Officer to further its efforts to engage the immigrant community, increase funding for immigration legal services to low-income individuals to address the rising number of individuals seeking services for deportation defense and consultations, and requests funds for monthly Citizenship Clinics for qualified residents of the city of Austin to apply for U.S. Citizenship; and

WHEREAS, the City advocates for comprehensive immigration reform through its federal legislative agenda, which urges the United States Congress to enact legislation accomplishing comprehensive immigration reform that: provides a realistic pathway to citizenship; works to keep families of immigrants intact; promotes public safety, national security, and economic prosperity; respects human rights and civil liberties; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City of Austin strongly opposes any policy that results in the separation of children from their parent/parents and/or siblings or that results in the mass incarceration of immigrant children;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is hereby directed to review the organizational structure and responsibilities in cities that have an Office of Immigrant Affairs or allocate substantial resources towards programs that serve the immigrant community; compare those to the City of Austin's current organizational structure and efforts; and make a recommendation to City Council to determine how the City can most effectively coordinate and support efforts related to the immigrant community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is hereby directed to explore options for funding monthly Citizenship Clinics per the direction of the Commission on Immigrant Affairs or partnering with other organizations to provide such services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The city council reaffirms its federal legislative agenda which states, "The City of Austin values inclusivity and recognizes the immense economic, social, and cultural contributions that people of all national origins and immigration statuses have made to this country. The City believes immigration is a federal policy issue, not a local one, and immigration enforcement laws should be nationally based, consistent, and federally funded. The City of Austin opposes legislation that attempts

to shift the cost and/or responsibility of enforcing civil immigration law to local governments and penalize them through the denial of federal funding.

The City of Austin supports legislation that provides comprehensive immigration reform and a path to citizenship for immigrants, including but not limited to DACA recipients. The City of Austin supports legislation that provides comprehensive immigration reform; opposes any legislation or federal action that would maintain or expand funding for a border wall or physical barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border; and opposes any legislation or federal action that would further militarize the border or maintain or expand the role of Federally-funded private prisons for the purpose of detaining immigrants.”

And, amends the legislative agenda to “(1) support policies that keep families together and out of detention centers, provides for the immediate reunification of families already separated, and stops needlessly prosecuting border crossing offenses; and (2) oppose any immigration policy that results in criminal prosecution or mass incarceration of migrants, including children, the use of for-profit private prisons to enforce immigration laws, or families being forcibly separated.”

ADOPTED: _____, 2018

ATTEST: _____

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk