

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF “FOR THE PEOPLE ACT OF 2021-(H.R.1/S.1)

By: City Council Member Scott Benson

WHEREAS, The Detroit City Council being an elected body of the City of Detroit is keenly aware of the of the importance and necessity of free and unobstructed access to the exercise of the right to vote in a democracy such as the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Recent actions taken by state legislatures around the country designed to restrict, impede and disenfranchise millions of eligible voters by way of placing additional burdens on voter registration, purging eligible voters from voting roles before election day, reducing the number of voting precincts in primarily poor and minority populated areas, are just a few of the atrocities being perpetrated in our democracy; and

WHEREAS, The United States House of Representatives has passed and presented to the United States Senate for passage the “For the People Act, (H.R.1/S.1)” to provide by federal law protections to the most fundamental right of a U.S. Citizen, the right to vote; and

WHEREAS, The For the People Act essentially improves and extends nationwide many of the voting rights and election reforms adopted in Michigan in 2018, for example, no-excuse absentee voting and non-partisan redistricting, as well as stopping many aspects of the voter suppression laws that have passed in Georgia, Florida, Iowa, and those that are pending in Michigan and Texas. The legislation also would reform campaign finance rules to strengthen transparency and increase ethics requirements across the federal government; and

WHEREAS, The For the People Act is a comprehensive legislative act which addresses a host of issues through ten enumerated Titles aimed at resolving matters that have plagued Federal institutions and Federal election processes. The provisions of the Act were examined in detail by the Brennan Center for Justice’s “Annotated Guide to the For the People Act of 2021”, dated March 18, 2021 and is highlighted herein:

Title I — Election Access

Aims to modernize voter registration and take other steps to improve voting access in federal elections through methods that include but are not limited to; Voter registration modernization; Promoting internet registration; Automatic voter registration; Same day voter registration; Conditions on removal of voters on the basis of Interstate Cross-checks; Prohibiting interference with voter registration; Voter Registration Efficiency Act; Providing voter registration information to secondary school students; Access to voting for individuals with

disabilities; Prohibiting voter caging practice of purging voters; Prohibiting deceptive practices and preventing voter intimidation; Promoting accuracy, integrity, and security through voter-verified permanent paper ballot; Requiring states to have uniform non-discriminatory standards for issuing, collecting and counting provisional ballots; Requiring states to provide early voting two weeks prior to the federal election and early voting tabulation; Require states to provide no excuse voting by mail and distribution to all registered voters, etc.; Enhancement of enforcement including notarized complaints to U.S. Attorney General and response from AG, as well as private right to litigate violations; Federal election integrity prohibiting state election officials who are candidates for federal office from overseeing election they are running in; and Disaster and emergency contingency plans directing state and local jurisdictions to develop contingency plans to enable eligible voters to participate in federal elections during times of emergency, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Title II — Election Integrity

Addresses restoration of the full protections of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and several other pressing voting rights issues, and also seeks to curb partisan gerrymandering of congressional districts, including but not limited to; Reaffirming commitment of Congress to restore the Voting Rights Act; issues relating to Native American Voting Rights; issues relating to District of Columbia Statehood; Redistricting reform; and Saving eligible voters from voter purging.

Title III — Election Security

This title aims to improve the security of U.S. election infrastructure to counter the threat of foreign interference, including but not limited to; Financial support for election infrastructure; Voting system security improvement grants; Grants for risk-limiting audits of results of elections; Election infrastructure innovation grant program; Promoting cybersecurity through improvements in election administration; Preventing election hacking; and Use of voting machines manufactured in the United States

Title IV — Campaign Finance Transparency

The provisions in this title is aimed to increase campaign finance transparency, deter corruption, and prevent foreign money from infiltrating U.S. elections, including but not limited to; Establishing duty to report foreign election interference; Closing loopholes allowing spending by foreign nationals in elections; Reporting of campaign-related disbursements; Disclosure of contributions to political committees immediately prior to election; Strengthening oversight of online political advertising; Secret money transparency; and Disclosure of political spending by government contractors.

Title V — Campaign Finance Empowerment

Aimed to counter the harmful effects of *Citizens United v. FEC* and related court decisions by empowering small donors and taking other steps to help working and middle class candidates run for office.

Title VI — Campaign Finance Oversight

Aimed to improve the administration and enforcement of campaign finance rules and take other steps to counter corruption, including but not limited to; Restoring integrity to America's elections; Stopping Super PAC-Candidate coordination; Disposal of contributions or donations; Recommendations to ensure filing of reports before date of election.

Title VII — Ethical Standards

Aimed at requiring new ethical standards for Supreme Court justices and presidential appointees, bolster enforcement of rules governing foreign agents operating in the United States, and strengthen lobbying disclosure rules.

Title VIII — Ethics Reforms for the President, Vice President, and Federal Officers and Employees.

Aimed at creating a variety of new ethics requirements for executive branch officials, including the president and vice president, and bolster enforcement of ethics rules in the executive branch, including but not limited to; Executive Branch conflict of interest; Presidential conflicts of interest; White House ethics transparency; Executive Branch ethics enforcement; and conflicts from political fundraising.

Title IX — Congressional Ethics Reform

Aimed at addressing legislative branch ethics, including but not limited to; requiring members of Congress to reimburse Treasury for amounts paid as settlements and awards under Congressional Accountability Act of 1995; conflicts of interest; and Campaign finance and lobbying disclosure.

Title X — Presidential and Vice Presidential Tax Transparency

Aimed at requiring sitting presidents, vice presidents, and major-party candidates for those offices to disclose their tax returns. The provision seeks to restore and codify the longstanding norm of tax return disclosure. It would, among other things, require disclosure of personal income tax returns and the returns of any businesses of which the filer is the sole or principal owner, going back ten years; and

WHEREAS, Recent actions of our Federal institutions and state legislatures require comprehensive action be taken by Congress and the Executive Branch of government as set forth in the aforementioned Titles of the For the People Act;
BE IT THEREFORE,

RESOLVED, That the Detroit City Council does hereby support the For the People Act (H.R.1/S.1), a transformative federal legislative package of voting rights, anti-corruption, and ethics reforms that will ensure every vote is counted and every voice is heard; and **BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to Mayor Mike Duggan, Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Senator Debbie Stabenow, Senator Gary Peters and the Detroit Congressional delegation.