**CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, NORTH CAROLINA**

**RESOLUTION TO UPHOLD THE RIGHT TO VOTE**

**Supporting a Constitutional Amendment to Grant an Explicit Right to Vote, Establishing a Task Force on Voting, and Commencing a Call to Action**

WHEREAS, voter turnout in North Carolina was 68% of registered voters in the 2012 presidential election and 44% of registered voters in the 2010 election; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina constitution, except where authority is explicitly delegated, generally does not permit local control of local elections, with most rules regarding election administration, even for purely local elections, prescribed by the state legislature, and

WHEREAS, North Carolina has enacted legislation that could impact eligible voters’ ability to vote, such as removing student identifications from the list of acceptable identifications, shortening the early voting period by one week, ending preregistration for 16- and 17-year-olds, and eliminating same-day registration in early voting beginning in the 2016 elections; and

WHEREAS, this legislation has the potential to affects access to voting for North Carolina’s young persons, senior citizens, and racial and ethnic minorities; and

WHEREAS, 50% of 18- to 24-year-olds in the state cast a ballot in the 2012 election; and

WHEREAS, over 92% of registered voters aged 65 or older cast a ballot in the 2012 election; and

WHEREAS, during the early voting period in the 2012 general election, 2.5 million voters cast a ballot; and

WHEREAS, although African Americans constitute 22% of all registered voters, African Americans constituted 29% of all voters who voted early in the state in 2012; and

WHEREAS, over 97,000 voters registered for the first time through same-day registration during the 2012 election, and over 152,000 voters updated their registration through the same day registration process; and

WHEREAS, same-day registration is highly correlated with an increased in voter participation — in the 2004 general election, approximately 55% of eligible voters cast a ballot, while over 60% of eligible voters cast a ballot in the 2012 election; and

WHEREAS, 160,000 voters who preregistered as 16- and 17-year-olds before 2012 were eligible to vote in 2012 and cast a valid ballot; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina State Board of Elections has found that as many as 9.25% of voters may not have a state-issued form of identification; and the American Civil Liberties Union of North Carolina has identified that African American voters, make up 31% of the registered voters, who do not possess a form of state-issued identification; and

WHEREAS, 18% of 18- to 24-year-olds as well as senior citizens aged 65 or older nationwide do not possess a form of photo ID; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina ranked 10th among all states in having the longest wait times at the polls on Election Day in 2012 even before this new law was passed; and

WHEREAS, nationwide, less than 60% of eligible voters participated in the 2012 presidential election and X% or eligible voters in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, of the 199 nations that elect their public officials using democratic elections, the United States is one of only 11 nations that does not have an explicit right to vote in its constitution; and

WHEREAS, the 15th, 19th, and 26th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution provide that the right to vote shall not be denied or abridged based on race, sex, and age respectively, and the 24th Amendment prohibits poll taxes, but these amendments do not guarantee Americans an explicit right to vote; and

WHEREAS, in 2013 the Supreme Court ruled in *Shelby County v. Holder* that the coverage formula in Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) is unconstitutional, thereby invalidating the formula used to determine which states are covered by Section 5 of the VRA; and

WHEREAS, Section 4 of the VRA was an effective tool in curbing racial discrimination in elections in 1965; and continued to be a critical instrument for free, fair and accessible elections, helping block laws making it more difficult to vote for nearly a half century; and

WHEREAS, an individual right to vote is a fundamental American right, and fundamental

rights should be guaranteed to all Americans in the U.S. Constitution; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL FOR \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, NORTH CAROLINA THAT:**

SECTION 1 – RIGHT TO VOTE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

We hereby affirm that the right to vote is a fundamental citizenship right to be cherished, protected, and exercised.

We call on our members of Congress, and our representatives in the state legislature, to support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would grant an explicit right to vote to every American citizen of voting age.

We urge our county to pass right to vote resolution committing support for an explicit right to vote in the U.S. Constitution.

SECTION 2 – TASK FORCE ON VOTING

We shall establish a Right to Vote Task Force to ensure that all eligible voters in our city have continued access to vote and to:

* Review all local laws and practices that may affect the right to vote in local, state and federal elections;
* Review and recommend changes at the local level to uphold voting rights and increase voter participation;
* Develop plans and take action to promote early voting and same-day registration and make recommendations to the Council on any policies or actions needed to strengthen these efforts;
* Develop plans for a voter registration program designed to register eligible high school students and support voter education programs to increase citizenship knowledge and participation in the democratic process;
* Cooperate with any local colleges seeking to uphold voting rights for their students who are eligible to vote in North Carolina elections;
* Review North Carolina election laws and regulations and recommend legislation that would strengthen the right to vote in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (municipality name), including the adoption of automatic voter registration, allowing eligible voters to opt-out of the voter registration database instead of “opt-in”; and
* Review with the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Board of Elections then strengths and weakness of our election practices and regulations after the 2014 general election; and

SECTION 3 – CALL TO ACTION

We call on Congress to restore Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by creating a new coverage formula to determine which states and local jurisdictions should have voting changes reviewed for potential discriminatory impact.

We call on the North Carolina General Assembly, for the 2014 election and all following elections, to reinstitute preregistration for 16- and 17-year olds, to extend the early voting period, and restore same-day registration in early voting.

We call on the North Carolina General Assembly to remove the restrictive voter photo ID requirement for the 2016 and all following elections.

We resolve that despite the obstacles to exercising our right to vote imposed by burdensome laws, we shall make every effort to ensure residents who are eligible voters can fully participate in every election in which they are eligible to cast a vote.

We shall provide suitable copies of this resolution to the governor, our state legislative representatives, the U.S. Speaker of the House, the U.S. Senate Majority Leader, this state’s congressional delegation, the U.S. President and our city and county elected representatives.