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Charles Allen

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Christina Henderson

Councilmember Christina Henderson

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18 A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

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23 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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28 To declare the sense of the Council that the U.S. Treasury should act expeditiously to provide the
29 District with additional emergency rental assistance funds and to declare that the Mayor of
30 the District of Columbia should use local funding options to prevent an imminent eviction
31 crisis by increasing the balance of the District’s Emergency Rental Assistance Program
32 (ERAP) to enable the program to support low-income renters through the remainder of the
33 Fiscal Year as the city recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

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35 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that this
36 resolution may be cited as the “Sense of the Council Eviction Prevention Resolution of 2021”.

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38 Sec. 2. The Council finds that:

39 (1) Every resident of the District of Columbia deserves safe, stable, and affordable
40 housing.

41 (2) The District currently faces an affordable housing crisis which has contributed to the
42 displacement of more than 20,000 Black residents in the past decade.

43 (3) Renters are an integral part of the District's communities, diversity, and economy,
44 making up 59% of the District's housing market.

45 (4) Even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly half of the District's
46 renters were rent-burdened and one quarter of renters were severely rent burdened, spending
47 more than half their income on housing.

48 (5) People of color are more likely to rent their homes and be rent burdened, with 65% of
49 Black households in DC being renters and 70% of Latino households being renters, and 30% and
50 28% experiencing severe rent burdens, respectively.

51 (6) The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated housing and economic instability by
52 disproportionately displacing residents from low-wage jobs primarily held by people of color.

53 (7) Throughout the pandemic, DC has held the highest Black unemployment rate and the
54 largest Black-white unemployment ratio in the nation.

55 (8) The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have disparate impacts on the health of Black
56 and brown residents, saddling more residents of color with medical debt from COVID treatment.

57 (9) The combined economic and health impacts of COVID-19 exacerbated conditions
58 where a high number of renters of color fell behind on housing payments leaving them at risk of
59 displacement with the eviction moratorium lifted and federal rental assistance being depleted.

60 (10) The household pulse survey conducted by Stout Risius Ross, LLC estimates 15% of
61 District rental household were behind on their rent as of October 11, 2021, representing as many
62 as 39,000 renters behind on housing bills.

63 (11) The survey estimates 33% of Black households are behind on rent compared to
64 0.6% of white households.

65 (12) STAY DC has successfully assisted more than 20,000 households to date yet
66 thousands more remain in need of assistance, and needs will persist throughout Fiscal Year 2022.

67 (13) The U.S. Treasury has cautioned the District that additional federal rental assistance
68 reallocated from Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) underspending in other states may not be
69 available until March 2022.

70 (14) The depletion of STAY DC funds combined with a lapse in additional assistance
71 from federal sources poses disproportionate and imminent eviction threats to Black, Latino, and
72 lower income households which could lead to their permanent displacement from the District.

73 (15) The District has significant financial resources available to prevent an eviction
74 crisis while additional federal aid is pending, including contingency cash reserves, unallocated
75 Fiscal Year 2022 revenue, and other funds available within the District's operating budget.

76 (16) The Mayor has the ability to initiate spending of local resources to respond in
77 emergencies such as this.

78 (17) Widespread evictions while COVID-19 still impacts the District would worsen
79 public health, economic, and housing displacement disparities.

80 (18) The Council stands ready to work with the Mayor to meet the needs of the District's
81 renters and landlords to ensure a strong and equitable recovery.

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83 Sec. 3. It is the sense of the Council that:

84 (1) Rental assistance funds are necessary to prevent evictions and stabilize both tenant
85 and landlord finances.

86 (2) It is necessary for the U.S. Treasury to provide the District of Columbia with
87 additional emergency rental assistance as soon as possible.

88 (3) It is necessary for the Mayor to identify funding that ensures the District's locally
89 managed Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) has sufficient resources to meet tenant
90 needs through the remainder of Fiscal Year 2022, including while the District awaits allocations
91 of additional federal assistance.

92 (4) The Mayor should prioritize eviction diversion funds for residents who are
93 scheduled for eviction or who have writs pending, but the Mayor should encourage all tenants
94 eligible for ERAP to apply for rental assistance as soon as possible.

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96 Sec. 4. The Secretary to the Council shall transmit copies of this resolution, upon its
97 adoption, to the Mayor, the Interim Chief Financial Officer of the District of Columbia, and the
98 Secretary of the U.S. Treasury.

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100 Sec. 5. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in
101 the District of Columbia Register.