

RESOLUTION NO.: R-2014-074

Restating the Founding Principles of Columbia, South Carolina to Welcome Unaccompanied Immigrant and Refugee Children and to Support Comprehensive Immigration Reform

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) reports that 350 children detained by immigration authorities were released to sponsors, typically relatives, in the State of South Carolina between January 1, 2014 and July 7, 2014 to be cared for while their immigration case is processed; and

WHEREAS, these 350 refugee children, who had no parent or guardian available to care for them when they were taken into custody, represent less than 1.2% of the 30,340 displaced children released to sponsor families across the nation; and

WHEREAS, displaced refugee children, like those placed in sponsor families in South Carolina, are often the most vulnerable among us having come to the United States fleeing violence, abuse or persecution in their home countries, as victims of human trafficking or simply seeking the opportunity to work hard and build a better life for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, the City of Columbia was founded in the spirit echoed in the words of Senator John Lewis Gervais who hoped "the oppressed of every land might find a refuge under the wings of Columbia"; and

WHEREAS, the City of Columbia believes that we have a duty to protect our children and provide for them and that to turn away a child in need, regardless of where he or she was born, is a violation not only of that spirit but of the fundamental principles of community and brotherhood upon which our city's foundations were built; and

WHEREAS, the City of Columbia further recognizes that the current influx of child refugees here and across the nation is only a symptom of a larger problem and that the only way to truly address the growing humanitarian crisis at our nation's southern border is to enact a comprehensive immigration reform plan that secures our borders, grows our economy and gives undocumented youth and their families the chance to earn their citizenship; NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Columbia, South Carolina on this 5th day of August, 2014 that we welcome every refugee child and unaccompanied immigrant child released to sponsors within our community by the Office of Refugee Resettlement and call on local, state and federal leaders to work together to address the current child refugee crisis by immediately adopting comprehensive immigration reform.

Requested by:

Mayor Steve Benjamin

Mayor

Approved by:

City Manager

Approved as to form:

ATTEST:



City Attorney

City Clerk

Introduced: 8/5/2014

Final Reading: