

RESOLUTION NO. 20161013-009

WHEREAS, the United States was founded by immigrants, many fleeing religious persecution, who enshrined freedom of religion as one of our nation's fundamental legal and ethical principles; and

WHEREAS, the history of Islam in the United States began even before its founding when African Muslims were enslaved and brought to the Americas, where they later helped in numerous ways to build this country, including sacrificing their lives on the line in every major war from the Revolutionary War on; and

WHEREAS, there are more than 3 million Muslims living in the United States today, making invaluable contributions to our economy, our social and political life, and our culture; and

WHEREAS, there has been an unprecedented backlash since 9/11 in the form of hate crimes and employment discrimination toward Arab and Muslim Americans and those perceived as Muslims; and

WHEREAS, Arab and Muslim Americans, and those perceived as Muslims, are frequently the targets of abusive and discriminatory police practices sanctioned by the state including surveillance in their neighborhoods and places of worship; and

WHEREAS, we are saddened and outraged at the recent escalation of hateful rhetoric against Muslims, those perceived to be Muslims, immigrants, and all people of color, and we are particularly concerned to see political figures and elected government officials leading this escalation and using it in order to gain power; and

WHEREAS, in the face of extreme bigotry and violence, Muslim communities and their leaders are using the language and teachings of Islam to promote peace and justice and service, and their institutions are continuing to play an essential societal role providing charitable and humanitarian services to those in need; and

WHEREAS, we, as elected representatives, have a special responsibility not to stay silent in the face of hatred, violence or discrimination against any of our constituents; and

WHEREAS, more than 500 elected officials around the country have signed an open letter condemning bigotry and anti-Muslim hate and pledging to support Muslims and immigrants who have come under attack in their communities, with the week of October 11, 2016 to October 14, 2016 as a national week of action; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

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

The City Council of Austin condemns all hateful speech and violent action directed at Muslims, those perceived to be Muslims, immigrants and people of color.

The City Council of Austin commits to pursuing a policy agenda that affirms civil and human rights, and ensures that those targeted on the basis of race, religion or immigration status can turn to government without fear of recrimination.

The City Council of Austin affirms the value of a pluralistic society, the beauty of a culture composed of multiple cultures, and the inalienable right of every person to live and practice their faith without fear.

ADOPTED: October 13, 2016

ATTEST: 
Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk