

RESOLUTION NO. _____

WHEREAS, March is Women’s History Month, pursuant to joint resolution passed by the United States Congress in 1987 which acknowledged women have “made historical contributions to the growth and strength of the Nation in countless recorded and unrecorded ways,” but despite that, “the role of American women in history has been consistently overlooked and undervalued”; and

WHEREAS, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the “Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women” (CEDAW) in 1979 to “condemn discrimination against women in all its forms”; and

WHEREAS, the report “Women in America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being,” which was released in 2011 by the White House Council on Women and Girls, found that despite past efforts in America to improve the well-being of women, women at all education levels earn less than their male counterparts; one out of seven adult women has no usual source of health care; and women are more likely than men to be targeted for crimes such as intimate partner violence and stalking; and

WHEREAS, the maternal mortality rate in Texas has significantly increased in recent years to over 30 per 100,000 live births in 2014, and in Travis County to the even higher rate of 40 maternal deaths per 100,000, which are both higher than the 2014 average of 23.8 per 100,000 among the District of Columbia and 48 states (excluding California at 15.1 per 100,000), and far higher than in other wealthy nations like Italy (2.1 deaths per 100,000), Japan (3.3 deaths per 100,000), Germany (4.1 deaths per 100,000), or France (5.5 deaths per 100,000); and

WHEREAS, women’s contributions to society are less likely to be acknowledged in public forums, such as the naming of streets – one study of seven cities around the world found that only 27.5 streets were named after women – which reinforces Congress’s 1987 observation that the role of women in American history is consistently overlooked and undervalued; and

WHEREAS, public and private institutions still use hiring practices which are known to perpetuate the effects of discrimination against women, such as basing new employees’ salaries on their salaries at previous employers, which for women means that past salary discrimination can follow them to new jobs; and

WHEREAS, the December 2015 “Business Disparities in the Austin, Texas Market Area” report prepared by NERA Economic Consulting found statistical evidence

consistent with the presence of business discrimination against minority- and women-owned businesses in Austin's private sector as well as and within the City's own contracting and purchasing activity, and concluded that one consequence of that discrimination is minorities and women are substantially less likely to own their own businesses than nonminority men; and

WHEREAS, the Council has previously taken steps to improve equality between women and men, including Resolution 20140417-051 which directed the City Manager to develop and implement a plan to require entities that contract with the City to report compensation data for their employees, according to race and gender; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 20160324-014 and Resolution 20161201-018 codified improvements to the anti-discrimination sections of the City's personnel policies; and

WHEREAS, Boards and Commissions such as the Commission on Women and the Human Rights Commission have made important recommendations to the City Council with regard to matters affecting equality between women and men, demonstrating knowledge and experience in the field; and

WHEREAS, there are other examples from elsewhere in the country that further demonstrate municipalities are capable of making significant strides to advance the equality of women and men, both within their departments and within the broader community, such as San Francisco's Department on the Status of Women which was tasked in 1998 with implementing CEDAW locally, and has successfully pioneered a number of programs to improve the welfare of women in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the phrase "women's rights are human rights" has been attributed to various sources over more than a century, but its meaning rings as loudly today as ever;
NOW, THEREFORE,

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

It shall be the goal of the City to implement the principles underlying CEDAW to eliminate any "distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of marital status, on the basis of equality between men and women, of human rights or fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council directs the City Manager to provide City of Austin's Commission for Women and the City's Human Rights Commission documentation of all of the City's previous efforts to address gender disparities in the City of Austin. The City of Austin's Commission for Women and the City's Human Rights Commission are directed to research other potential practices that have not been documented and addressed by the City, which have an unintended disparate impact on women but are commonly used by local governmental entities comparable to the City of Austin; examine whether those practices are being used within the City, and if so, their nature and scope; and develop recommendations for modifying City policies or practices to eliminate those disparate impacts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council requests those recommendations be separated into items that can be achieved in the short term and items that can only be achieved in the long term, and with regard to short term items, give special consideration to:

- Steps to review City of Austin practices with regard to requesting previous salary data from newly hired employees, and appropriate measures to eliminate those practices; and
- Steps to study disparities in Austin between streets named after men and those named after women, and appropriate measures to eliminate those disparities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council requests that the Commission for Women and the Human Rights Commission jointly submit any recommendations developed pursuant to this resolution to the Council within 180 days from the date of this resolution.

ADOPTED: _____, 2017

ATTEST: _____

Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk