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24 **WHEREAS**, these bills would make it harder for Austin communities – and
25 especially communities of color – to vote through:

- 26 • Banning 24-hour voting;
- 27 • Banning drive-through voting;
- 28 • Prohibiting state election officials from proactively disseminating
29 absentee ballots;
- 30 • Adding new identification requirements for voting-by-mail;
- 31 • Limiting third-party ballot collection;
- 32 • Expanding the authority and autonomy of partisan poll watchers; and
- 33 • Requiring monthly reviews of the state’s voter rolls to identify
34 noncitizens; and

35 **WHEREAS**, these provisions conflict with the City’s adopted legislative
36 priorities for the 87th Texas Legislative Session (Resolution No. 20200917-017)
37 which, in part, support: improving standards for polling places; repealing punitive
38 and restrictive identification requirements to access the ballot; increasing outreach
39 and distribution of elections and voter registration information to eligible Texans
40 who are not currently registered to vote; and providing for no-excuse absentee
41 voting that would allow voting-by-mail for all eligible voters, especially during a
42 declared state of emergency; and

43 **WHEREAS**, if passed, House Bill 3 and Senate Bill 1 would exacerbate
44 already low voter turnout rates in Texas which is ranked 50th in the nation by the
45 Election Law Journal for ease of voting; and

46 **WHEREAS**, citizens of Austin support measures to address this
47 undemocratic reality, as evidenced by approved revisions to the City Charter in
48 2012 to establish 10 single-member Council districts, and to hold municipal

49 elections in November rather than in May; in subsequent elections, voter turnout in
50 Austin municipal elections increased by as much as 400 percent; and

51 **WHEREAS**, this resolution furthers the goals set out in the Strategic
52 Direction 2023 as the percentage of eligible residents registered to vote and who
53 participate in City elections is one of the metrics for the strategic outcome referred
54 to as “Government That Works for All;” and

55 **WHEREAS**, the legislation currently being considered by the Texas
56 legislature – introduced under the guise of election integrity – would be a solution
57 in search of a problem, as evidenced by the Texas Secretary of State office’s
58 assertion that the 2020 election was “smooth and secure,” and the consistent lack
59 of widespread voter fraud throughout Texas; and

60 **WHEREAS**, conversely, House Bill 3 and Senate Bill 1 are responses to
61 historic voter participation in Texas during the 2020 election resulting from
62 jurisdictions increasing access to the ballot box through ensuring voters felt safe
63 (i.e., creating mobile or temporary voting locations, expanding provisions that
64 allow curbside voting, and extending early voting); and

65 **WHEREAS**, proponents of this legislation seek to build on recent Supreme
66 Court precedent eviscerating voting protections once provided by the Voting
67 Rights Act of 1965 and on anti-voter Texas laws which have been ruled
68 unconstitutional by lower courts and placed within the context of the state’s long
69 history of voter suppression that has disproportionately disenfranchised Texans of
70 color; and

71 **WHEREAS**, on July 12, 2021, members of the Texas House of
72 Representatives broke quorum for the second time in as many months, preventing
73 further consideration of House Bill 3 and adoption of Senate Bill 1; and

74 **WHEREAS**, through Resolution No. 20200917-017, the City of Austin
75 committed to support state legislation that improves the quality of life for its
76 residents, protect Austin’s civil rights ordinances, and oppose that which tarnishes
77 the City’s status as an inclusive community for all; and

78 **WHEREAS**, House Bill 3 and Senate Bill 1 would silence many in our
79 City, thus disallowing community input needed to equitably address today’s
80 challenges; and

81 **WHEREAS**, these anti-democratic bills are antithetical to the values that
82 define the City of Austin; and

83 **WHEREAS**, Congressman Lewis once proclaimed, “When you see
84 something that is not right, not fair, not just, you have to speak up. You have to say
85 something; you have to do something;”

86 **NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

88 The City of Austin recognizes that our communities thrive when all voices
89 are heard in our democratic processes and reaffirms support for state and federal
90 legislation that promotes and protects voting rights and access to voting, as well as
91 greater inclusion and civic empowerment.

92 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

93 City Council urges members of the Texas Legislature to withdraw House Bill
94 3 and Senate Bill 1 and instead take proactive measures to protect voting rights and
95 promote access to voting.

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