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RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, recent Federal legislation addressing immigration and welfare reform has been the cause of significant concern to many individuals living in Austin; and

WHEREAS, Austin has been a city that traditionally respects the rights of all individuals, regardless of immigration status; and

WHEREAS, immigrants do not generally rely on public social services, and many immigrants are long-time residents of the United States; and

WHEREAS, immigrants contribute to Austin's culture, richness and the support of the economy through their work and entrepreneurship, the purchase of goods, and the payment of taxes, thereby contradicting the argument that immigrants drain government resources; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

That the Austin City Council declares it to be the policy of the City of Austin that it will not discriminate or deny city services on the basis of a person's immigration status; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Austin City council declares the City of Austin to be a "Safety Zone" where all persons are treated equally, with respect and dignity, regardless of immigration status.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Austin City Council directs the City Manager to study the effects of the new immigration and welfare reform legislation on our City departments.

ADOPTED: January 30, 1997

ATTEST:

James E. Aldridge
City Clerk

RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, the immigration of persons to America and to Austin is an issue that touches us in profound and unique ways; and

WHEREAS, each Council Member holds his and her own experiences and viewpoints, but all Council Members share common beliefs about the contributions and rights of immigrants; and

WHEREAS, Austin benefits immensely from the economic, cultural and social contributions made by the talents and gifts of immigrants to our businesses, our neighborhoods, our cultural and intellectual fabric; and

WHEREAS, laws passed by Congress and signed by the President greatly diminish the abilities and opportunities of immigrants to continue to make contributions by denying them many of the ordinary federal benefits that sustain and assist the citizens of this Country in living productive lives; and

WHEREAS, immigrants laboring and paying taxes should in fairness be entitled to the same ordinary benefits extended to citizens in similar circumstances, especially when temporary assistance could help bridge personal difficulties or crises; and

WHEREAS, the new laws represent a shifting of massive costs from the federal

government to state and local governments seeking to maintain assistance to those in need, with the impact to be felt especially by the states of California, Florida, New York and Texas; and

WHEREAS, a vital need exists to provide the INS District Office in San Antonio with more resources and assistance to reduce the current backlog of citizenship applications confronting Austin residents and preventing qualified immigrants from obtaining citizenship; and

WHEREAS, this Council believes that the President and Congress must revise these new welfare and immigration laws to eliminate the discriminatory and punitive effects that tend to undermine the health and safety of immigrants and the communities in which they live in; NOW, THEREFORE;

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

1. The City Council will form a task force to examine and recommend actions that can be taken by the City to address the impact of the welfare and immigration laws on residents of Austin.
2. The City will collaborate with the Austin Independent School District to insure that facilities will be accessible for the establishment of citizenship classes.
3. The City Council will write letters to President Clinton, Senators Phil Gramm and Kay Bailey Hutchison, and Congressman Lloyd Doggett to urge them to renew the current adjustment law (Section 245 (I) of the Immigration and Nationality Act) and spare the separation of children from parents, husbands from wives, and family members from

each other.

4. The City Council will appoint an advisory committee of immigrant leaders to advise the City Council on matters and issues of importance to the immigrant community in the Austin area.

5. The City Council commits to initiating these actions during the current fiscal year.

ADOPTED: September 25, 1997 ATTEST: James E. Aldridge
James E. Aldridge
City Clerk