

RESOLUTION BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT PRO-TEM MARY SHEFFIELD

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DECENT WAGES FOR DOWNTOWN DETROIT WORKERS

WHEREAS, The widely-celebrated resurgence of downtown Detroit has largely been fueled by development projects that range from the renovation of long-shuttered office/commercial buildings to the construction of major venues like Little Caesars Arena. These projects have been supplemented to a great degree with Public assistance -through tax abatements, gap funding, incentives and other subsidies. In recent years, the Detroit City Council and Wayne County Commission have approved more than \$1 billion in tax incentives in and around the downtown district; and

WHEREAS, However, the unsung heroes of downtown Detroit’s resurgence are the hard-working men and women who serve as security guards and janitors, in these new or renovated downtown buildings that symbolize the recent renaissance. While their tax dollars have helped to bring these projects to fruition, far too often these workers are not sharing in the district’s prosperity. Currently on average, janitors and security guards working in downtown Detroit earn between \$9 and \$12.45 an hour. These individuals often work long hours, often extending their work weeks through the weekend– while putting their health and personal safety at risk - yet their earnings are so low, that many are still eligible for food stamps and housing assistance; and

WHEREAS, While the national poverty rate is 14 percent, it is 36 percent in Detroit, the highest among the 20 largest cities in America. In 2017, the United Ways of Michigan released a study that found 52 percent of Wayne County families were either under the poverty line or were what it identified as “ALICE” families — asset-limited, income-constrained, employed, or the working poor. Which represents those in our communities who are working and yet still are struggling to make ends meet; and

WHEREAS, Milwaukee, Wisconsin offers a great blueprint for development that combines economic growth and community investment. The Milwaukee Bucks’ new arena received only \$250 million in public money and the jobs created by this project will be good ones. Scheduled to open in fall of 2018, the Bucks’ new 714,000-square-foot arena will employ nearly 1,000 workers. The Bucks’ owners have agreed to remain neutral if these workers want to join a union. At least half of all employees in Milwaukee’s permanent arena jobs will be residents of zip codes with the highest poverty and highest unemployment in Milwaukee; and

WHEREAS, In addition, there is a strong business case that can be made for paying workers a decent living wage. Low wages for workers result in increased turnover rates, increased absenteeism, and overall increased staffing costs; **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED, The Detroit City Council supports SEIU Local 1’s appeal to downtown building owners to ensure that the janitors and security guards in their buildings earn a minimum of \$15 an hour, a salary that will enable these workers to lift their families out of poverty and to contribute to their communities; **BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED, That the Detroit City Council urges downtown building owners to honor our region's heritage as the birthplace of organized labor, by respecting janitors' and security guards' right to affiliate with unions to negotiate wages, free from employer interference; **BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED That the Detroit City Council strongly encourages downtown developers' to voluntarily commit paying their employees a living wage, particularly their respective janitorial and security general staffs, for projects requiring significant public investment, as was so effectively done in the development of the new Milwaukee Bucks arena; **BE IT FINALLY**

RESOLVED, That the Detroit City Council will use its influence to ensure that downtown workers are paid a wage that honors their commitment to Detroit; commitment that has made new downtown developments possible.