



Councilmember Kenyan R. McDuffie

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To recognize and commend Elizabeth G. Oyer for her distinguished public service, unwavering commitment to justice, and principled leadership as the United States Pardon Attorney.

WHEREAS, Elizabeth G. Oyer, a resident of Washington, D.C., has dedicated her legal career to championing the rights of the underserved, upholding constitutional protections, and ensuring a fair and balanced justice system for all;

WHEREAS, Ms. Oyer began her legal career as a law clerk to the Honorable Stanley Marcus of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, laying the foundation for a distinguished career defined by public interest advocacy and judicial integrity;

WHEREAS, Ms. Oyer served as an Assistant Federal Public Defender, advocating on behalf of clients and upholding the constitutional right to counsel;

WHEREAS, Ms. Oyer later served as Senior Litigation Counsel for the Office of the Federal Public Defender;

WHEREAS, Ms. Oyer brought her expertise to the private sector as a partner at Mayer Brown LLP, one of the nation's leading law firms, where she practiced criminal and civil litigation at the trial and appellate levels;

WHEREAS, in 2022, she was appointed by the U.S. Department of Justice as the Pardon Attorney, becoming the first former public defender to ever lead the Office of the Pardon

41 Attorney—a historic appointment that brought a people-centered perspective to clemency
42 review;

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44 WHEREAS, under her leadership, the Office of the Pardon Attorney worked to
45 streamline the clemency process, improve transparency, and prioritize equity—ensuring
46 applicants were treated with dignity regardless of their background, political affiliation, or media
47 visibility;

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49 WHEREAS, she emphasized a data-informed and community-responsive approach to
50 clemency, giving voice to advocates, families, and directly impacted individuals in shaping a
51 fairer pardon and commutation process;

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53 WHEREAS, during her tenure, she also resisted unprecedented political pressure to
54 approve clemency requests that posed threats to public safety or lacked merit—most notably,
55 refusing to reinstate gun rights for individuals with domestic violence records despite significant
56 political backlash;

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58 WHEREAS, her principled stand and commitment to the rule of law ultimately led to her
59 dismissal in March 2025, drawing national outcry and underscoring the importance of protecting
60 independent, ethical decision-making within the federal justice system;

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62 WHEREAS, even after her dismissal, Ms. Oyer has remained a tireless advocate for
63 justice, testifying before Congress, writing publicly on the importance of clemency reform, and
64 continuing to mentor and support legal professionals committed to public interest law;

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66 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
67 resolution may be cited as the “Elizabeth G. Oyer Recognition Resolution of 2025”

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69 Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia recognizes and commemorates Elizabeth
70 G. Oyer for her unwavering dedication to justice, her historic leadership as Pardon Attorney, and
71 her lifelong commitment to serving others through the law.

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73 Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.