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Councilmember Vincent C. Gray

Councilmember Elissa Silverman

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A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To declare the Sense of the Council that the District of Columbia government should ensure ongoing support for the National Cherry Blossom Festival.

16 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
17 resolution may be cited as the “Sense of the Council Supporting the National Cherry Blossom
18 Festival Resolution of 2019”.

19 Sec. 2. The Council finds that:

20 (1) National Cherry Blossom Festival, Inc. (“NCBF”) is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit
21 corporation incorporated in the District of Columbia (“District”) that was founded in 1985 to
22 plan, coordinate, and promote the annual National Cherry Blossom Festival (“Festival”) in the
23 District.

24 (2) The Festival has been held almost every year since 1927 to commemorate the 1912
25 gift of 3,000 cherry trees by the Mayor of Tokyo to the city of Washington, D.C., a symbol of
26 friendship and goodwill between the United States and Japan. The Festival continues to affirm
27 this important relationship.

28 (3) From its inception, the Festival has been supported and enjoyed by District residents,
29 including the District government, community organizations, schoolchildren, and volunteers.

30 (4) The Festival has been the signature event of the District, which showcases its many
31 cultural and educational assets and its values of hospitality, inclusion, and transformation,
32 solidifying the District as THE nation’s springtime destination.

33 (5) The Festival has grown to an internationally recognized month-long celebration of
34 spring, featuring events, primarily free and accessible to the public, throughout the District and
35 region, including, but not limited to, the Opening Ceremony at the Warner Theater, the Blossom
36 Kite Festival on the National Mall, Petalpalooza on the Southwest Waterfront, the National
37 Cherry Blossom Festival Parade on Constitution Avenue, the Anacostia River Festival in

38 Anacostia Park, and the Welcome Area and Stage at the Tidal Basin, presenting over 100 free
39 performances, including featuring local performers.

40 (6) During the spring, the Festival anchors the District's tourist economy, each year
41 attracting more than 1.5 million people, 45% of whom come from beyond the District, Maryland,
42 and Virginia, making a \$160 million economic impact on the District, and bringing tremendous
43 media attention to the District and the Festival by reaching a media audience of more than 3
44 billion.

45 (7) NCBF uses the Festival's strong brand and marketing platform to promote and grow
46 community events across the District, working with over 40 organizations participating annually
47 in official events of the Festival, as well as engaging local performance groups. NCBF has built a
48 network of local businesses, community groups, and 1,500 dedicated volunteers that enables it to
49 serve the District through engaging, educational, culturally enriching programs and community
50 engagement programs that bring the celebration of the Festival into the community, such as the
51 D.C. Public and Charter School Student Poster Art Contest and the Neighborhood Tree Planting
52 Program, through which more than 900 cherry trees have been planted in all eight wards.

53 (8) Each year, NCBF's 26-member board of local public and private sector
54 leaders and 13-person staff raise more than \$5 million to plan, coordinate, and promote the
55 Festival.

56 (9) In recognition of the Festival's impact on the District, the District government has
57 provided support for the Festival since its inception, including, on a year-to-year basis, direct
58 financial support since 2005 and a matching grant directed by the Council of the District of
59 Columbia through the Washington Convention and Sports Authority since 2016.

60 Sec. 3. It is the sense of the Council that:

61 (1) The Festival provides great economic and cultural benefits to District residents,
62 showcasing the city to the world as a progressive, creative capital; and

63 (2) The District government should ensure ongoing District support for the Festival by
64 providing permanent funding to NCBF to ensure the continued economic and cultural vitality of
65 this truly D.C. event.

66 Sec. 4. The Secretary to the Council shall transmit copies of this resolution, upon its
67 adoption, to the Mayor and the Washington Convention and Sports Authority.

68 Sec. 5. This resolution shall take effect upon the first date of publication in the District of
69 Columbia Register.