

A RESOLUTION

23-453

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

July 7, 2020

To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to symbolically designate 16th Street, N.W., between H Street N.W., and K Street N.W., in Ward 2, as Black Lives Matter Plaza.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may cited as the “Black Lives Matter Plaza Designation Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2020”.

Sec. 2. (a) There exists an immediate need to designate the portion of 16th Street N.W., between H Street N.W., and K Street N.W., in Ward 2, as Black Lives Matter Plaza.

(b) In the summer of 2013, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi created Black Lives Matter in response to the acquittal of George Zimmerman of second-degree murder for the death of Trayvon Martin, who was on his way home from a convenience store when he was stalked, assaulted, and shot by Zimmerman.

(c) Black Lives Matter has been at the forefront of advocating for racial justice, including organizing protests, rallies, and other actions in response to the deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Sandra Bland, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, and other Black men and women at the hands of police.

(d) The vestiges of slavery, segregation, and “separate but equal” treatment persist in our culture, laws, and institutions, leading to continued harm against Black communities in the form of discrimination and violence. Black Lives Matter is a rallying cry and social movement that affirms the worth of Black lives in a society in which Black life is devalued and criminalized.

(e) Despite the violence and discrimination that the Black community in the District of Columbia faces, its achievements and contributions to the social, cultural, and political landscape of the District are vast and include:

- (1) Building the city in the late 18th century while in bondage;
- (2) Leading efforts to abolish slavery, expand voting rights, and codify equal treatment under the law as a basic principle of America’s founding documents;
- (3) The success of Howard University, the only federally chartered historically Black college and one of the most prestigious colleges in the country;
- (4) The founding of African American history as an academic field of study;

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(5) The creation of “Black Broadway” on U Street, a thriving community of artists, musicians, and writers whose work has had a profound effect on America’s culture;  
(6) Laying the foundation for the modern civil rights movement;  
(7) Creating the musical subgenre Go-go in the mid-to-late 1960’s; and  
(8) Leading the Statehood Movement, including the passage of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act.

(f) On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man in Minneapolis, was killed by a police officer who suffocated him with his knee, leading to a wave of protests across the country against racism and police brutality.

(g) In response to the protests in the District and across the country, and in recognition of the work that still needs to be done to ensure that Black lives do matter, Mayor Muriel Bowser stated publicly on June 5, 2020, that the portion of 16th Street N.W., between H Street N.W., and K Street N.W., should be designated as Black Lives Matter Plaza. The Council adopted the designation by emergency act as part of the Coronavirus Support Clarification Emergency Amendment Act of 2020, effective July 7, 2020 (D.C. Act 23-332; 67 DCR \_\_\_\_), but that legislation will expire on October 4, 2020.

(h) This designation re-affirms the value of the lives and legacy of the District’s Black community and re-affirms our commitment to racial justice and equity.

Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the Black Lives Matter Plaza Designation Emergency Act of 2020 be adopted after a single reading.

Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.