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Committee: Committee on Finance and Law

Status: Passed Finally

Resolution declaring housing as a human right.

**Whereas**, a recent report by Research for Action found over 31,000, or 1.8 percent of K-12, students in the state experienced homelessness in 2018-19; and,

**Whereas**, it also shows that Pennsylvania schools under-identify the number of students facing homelessness; and,

**Whereas**, the number of people using Safe Haven programs has been steadily decreasing since 2014 due to the phasing out of this type of housing under HUD funding. All HUD-funded Safe Haven programs in the region ended in 2017. Eight Safe Haven beds were in use on the night of January 29, 2020. These beds are funded by the VA Grant Per Diem Program and are available only to eligible veterans referred by the VA; and,

**Whereas**, in the U.S., 20%-40% of homeless youth identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and/or queer (LGBTQ), while only 3%-5% of the overall youth population identifies as LGBTQ; 44% of gay homeless youth are African-American and 26% of gay homeless youth identify as Latino; 62% of transgender homeless youth are African-American and 20% of transgender homeless youth are Latino; and LGBTQ youth are twice as likely to be the victims of sexual crimes while homeless; and,

**Whereas**, immigrants are more likely to face barriers to enforcing their housing rights including language barriers, cultural mistrust, fear of government agencies, fear of retaliation, lack of familiarity with applicable laws, and lack of familiarity with judicial and administrative procedures for enforcing their rights; and,

**Whereas**, studies have shown that the most important piece of a person getting stabilized from struggles with employment, addiction, mental health issues and physical health is by having stable, long-term housing as a first step; and

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH DOES HEREBY DECLARE HOUSING TO BE A HUMAN RIGHT.**

**And, therefore, be it resolved**, that housing shall be recognized as a human right and that all people who desire a place of shelter and stable long-term housing be prioritized to have this basic need met both temporarily and permanently. In doing so, the City of Pittsburgh recommits to the goals in its *Affordable Housing Task Force Report* that call for the availability of safe, decent and sanitary and distinctive housing for all residents as well as the objectives and policies that accompany that goal.

**And be it further resolved**, that the City of Pittsburgh Department of Planning in consultation with the

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Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Land Bank, mayoral and City Council representatives, Registered Community Organizations and citizens will present an *Annual Housing Plan* to Pittsburgh City Council. The mayor's Chief Economic Development Officer or mayoral designee will be responsible for the City's housing policy and monitoring the implementation and progress of the *Annual Housing Plan*.

**And be it further resolved**, that the *Annual Housing Plan* will include an assessment of the affordable and accessible housing needs in Pittsburgh and recommendations for strategies to provide those housing units and shelter beds at appropriate affordability levels by 2041, including ensuring that enough accessible housing is available.

**And be it further resolved** that the City of Pittsburgh will explore creative uses of public (e.g., TIF, Housing Opportunity Fund, bond, federal, state and local government funds) and private dollars to provide a variety of increased affordable housing, accessible housing and shelter beds, as identified in the *Annual Housing Plan*.

**And be it further resolved** that the issues and solutions contained in the *Affordable Housing Task Force* final report be reviewed and considered for incorporation into the *Annual Housing Plan*.

**And be it further resolved** that the *Annual Housing Plan* will include recommendations of policies to prevent foreclosures, evictions, criminalization of homelessness and to help stabilize people in their housing.

**And be it further resolved** that the *Annual Housing Plan* will affirmatively further fair housing as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**And be it further resolved** that the *Annual Housing Plan* will primarily make recommendations based on the current housing market conditions but will not overlook issues that may face the City if the market changes.

**And be it finally resolved** that the City of Pittsburgh will work in partnership with Allegheny County, surrounding municipalities and community partners to develop the *Annual Housing Plan* and address housing issues in the region.