

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HARRISONBURG,  
RECOGNIZING JUNE 20, 2024 AS WORLD REFUGEE DAY, AND ANNUALLY  
THEREAFTER**

**WHEREAS**, as of 2023, there were more than 35 million refugees throughout the world, people displaced from their home country who are unwilling or unable to return due to a fear of persecution based on race, nationality, or religion; and

**WHEREAS**, UNICEF reports that approximately half of the world's refugees are children; and

**WHEREAS**, the UNHCR has determined that 2.4 million refugees are in need of immediate resettlement and that these refugees include torture survivors, people with severe medical conditions, LGBTQ individuals, orphaned children, and women at risk of gender-based violence, all of whom cannot return to their homeland and cannot stay in their host country due to their extreme vulnerability; and

**WHEREAS**, the International Rescue Committee reports that 76 percent of the world's refugees are hosted by poor, low and middle-income countries, many of which have inadequate resources to keep refugees fed, housed, or safe; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States participates in a resettlement program that is critical to global humanitarian efforts and reflects America's finest values, strengthens global security, and alleviates some of the burden placed on front-line host countries; and

**WHEREAS**, refugees that enter the United States are among the most vetted travelers to enter this country and are subject to extensive screening checks, including in-person interviews, biometric data checks, and multiple interagency checks; and

**WHEREAS**, once they settle in the United States, refugees contribute to their communities by starting businesses, paying taxes, and sharing their cultural traditions; these new residents are workers, students, entrepreneurs, parents, neighbors, and community leaders who contribute more than they consume in state-funded services; the Department of Health and Human Services reported that refugees and asylees contributed a \$124 billion net positive fiscal impact to the American economy; and

**WHEREAS**, Harrisonburg has been and continues to be a welcoming home to a diverse population of refugees and immigrants who add to the economic strength and cultural richness of the Commonwealth of Virginia; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2002, over 2,000 refugees have been resettled to Harrisonburg, enriching the social, linguistic and cultural vibrancy of our City; and

**WHEREAS**, immigrants in Harrisonburg have contributed significantly to the city's economy, including over \$29 million in taxes and spending power of \$90.5 million; and

**WHEREAS**, residents of Harrisonburg aspire to live up to our highest societal values of acceptance and equality, and treat newcomers with decency and respect, creating a vibrant community for all to live in; and

**WHEREAS**, World Refugee Day is an annual commemoration adopted by the United Nations in 2000 to honor and raise awareness of refugees;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA:**

That June 20, 2024, and the 20th of June of every year thereafter, shall be designated as World Refugee Day in the City of Harrisonburg.

Adopted this 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 2024

  
MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
CITY CLERK