DETROIT CITY COUNCIL

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WHEREAS

The Honorable Coleman A. Young II, Detroit City Councilman At Large Recognizes the Robust Importance of Family Court Awareness Month.

WHEREAS

Family Court Awareness Month (FCAM) was created to raise an increased awareness on the importance of a family court system the prioritizes child safety and acts in the best interests of children. This mission aims to improve recognition among court professional legislators, and the public that family court decisions have profound and lasting impacts on the lives of children and families, making essential that these decisions are informed by the latest research and best practices in child safety; and

WHEREAS

Family Court Awareness Month cites that 58,000 children in the U.S. are ordered into unsupervised contact with abusive parents each yea resulting in hundreds of child murders during visitation with a dangerous parent. In Michigan, 39 children have been killed by a paren since 2008 during divorce or custody disputes; and

WHEREAS

Family Court Awareness Month references August 2024 when a 6-year-old Rowan Morey of Caledonia, Michigan, was not returned to h mother after his father's parenting time. Police later discovered that Rowan had been shot and killed by his father, who then took his ow life. Rowan's mother had previously reported the father's abusive behavior to both family court and Child Protective Services; and

WHEREAS

Family Court Awareness Month references August 2022 when a 16-month-old Chaos Demilo McCarthy was murdered by his father i Genesee County. A Genesee County judge had awarded the father temporary custody just weeks before the boy's death, despite the father prior felony conviction; and

WHEREAS

Family Court Awareness Month references September 2021 when a3-year-old Dylan Thebo was fatally shot by his father in a murde: suicide during court-ordered visitation in Kent County. Dylan's mother had made repeated efforts to report her ex-husband's abuse an threats to six different entities; and

WHEREAS

Family Court Awareness Month references Tsimhoni children's abuse claims in 2015 were dismissed by the Oakland County Family Cour and the children were sent to juvenile hall for resisting visitation with their father. Controversial reunification therapy was ordered, which mandates reconciliation with alleged abusers. This therapy, which is not evidence-based, has been shown to be detrimental and despit findings of judicial misconduct in the case, reunification therapy is still frequently ordered by family courts; and

WHEREAS

Family Court Awareness Month references Kent County, Michigan, following six domestic violence-related homicides within three month in 2021, recognized the need for a specialized Domestic Violence Court. This court, staffed by individuals knowledgeable about th intricacies of domestic violence, aims to support victims and families, hold offenders accountable, and prevent further homicides; and

WHEREAS

Family Court Awareness Month has a mission to promote judicial education and awareness about the necessity of using scientificall validated, evidence-based treatment programs that are proven to be safe and effective. This education should include training on domesti violence, child abuse (emotional, psychological, physical, and sexual), childhood trauma, coercive control, and post-separation abuse fc judges and all professionals involved in family court cases; and

WHEREAS

Family Court Awareness Month is dedicated to educating judges and family court professionals on the importance of incorporatin evidence-based, peer-reviewed research into their decision-making. This includes the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Stud (Vincent Felitti, Kaiser Permanente-CDC), Child Custody Evaluators' Beliefs About Domestic Abuse Allegations (Daniel Saunders, Universit of Michigan), and Child Custody Outcomes in Cases Involving Parental Alienation and Abuse Allegations (Joan S. Meier, GW Law School This research reveals a prevalent gender bias against mothers who report abuse in family courts, despite false allegations being rare, an emphasizes the need for impartial decision-making to protect children's well-being; and

WHEREAS

Family Court Awareness Month aims to encourage collaboration among legislators, advocates, professionals, and the community t improve family court practices, ensuring they are guided by evidence-based research and prioritize the safety and best interests of children NOW, THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED

The Honorable Coleman A. Young II, Council Member At-Large #1 along with Honorable Detroit City Council Members celebrate th mission, dedication, and excellence of Family Court Awareness Month. WE appreciate the innovative and evidence-based research that i devoted to the safety of children and families. WE salute you for bringing awareness to child safety. The training and education provided i imperative in keeping OUR Michigan families safe. Family Court Awareness Month will be forever appreciated by the City of Detroit.

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