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TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director 
Legislative Policy Division Staff

DATE: March 16, 2023

RE: **RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE APRIL AS ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH**

Council Member Gabriela Santiago-Romero requested that the Legislative Policy Division (LPD) draft a RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE APRIL AS ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH.

Please contact us if we can be of any further assistance.

BY COUNCIL MEMBER GABRIELA SANTIAGO-ROMERO

RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE APRIL AS ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

- WHEREAS,** The Arab American Institute estimates that there are roughly 3,700,000 Arab Americans living in the United States; and
- WHEREAS,** The Greater Detroit area is home to one of the largest, oldest and most diverse Arab American communities in the United States, with an estimated population of 300,000 to 350,000; and
- WHEREAS,** Although Arab Americans share a common linguistic and cultural heritage, the Arab American population is ethnically, religiously, and politically diverse, spanning 22 countries from North Africa to the Arabian Gulf; and
- WHEREAS,** Since migrating to the United States, people of Arab descent have shared their rich culture and traditions with neighbors and friends, while also setting fine examples of model citizens and public servants; and
- WHEREAS,** The Arab American community has had a visible influence in Detroit and the surrounding communities, most notably Dearborn, which is a hub of Arab American business, food, entertainment, education, and cultural events; and
- WHEREAS,** Arab Americans have brought with them to the United States their resilient family values, strong work ethic, dedication to education, and diversity in faith and creed that have added strength to our democracy; and
- WHEREAS,** For over a century, Arab Americans have been making valuable contributions to every aspect of American society—in medicine, law, business, technology, civic engagement, government, and culture; and
- WHEREAS,** The growth and development of Arab-American communities transforms and enriches all areas of American civic, social, and political life, including in the areas of religious pluralism, poetry and philosophy, and journalism, to name just a few; and
- WHEREAS,** According to Census Bureau data, Arabic is one of the fastest growing languages in the United States; and
- WHEREAS,** The Federal Government has overstepped its constitutional boundaries in regard to surveillance and suspicion of the Arab-American community as far back as the 1960s, when the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) included Arabs as targets of its Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO); and
- WHEREAS,** Media representations of Arab Americans in the post-9/11 era reinforce longstanding racial stereotypes about Arabs, which contribute to anti-Arab hate crimes and obscure the actual character and complexity of community members; and

WHEREAS, Systemic and structural anti-Arab discrimination have impacted the health outcomes, socioeconomic conditions, and life chances of Arab Americans in ways not captured by the Federal data on racial and ethnic minorities, leading to the persistence of racist disparities; and

WHEREAS, There is a need for public education, awareness, and policies that are culturally competent when describing, discussing, and addressing the impacts of being Arab American in all aspects of American society; and

WHEREAS, President Biden recognized the celebration of Arab American Heritage Month in an April 19th, 2021, letter to Arab America and the Arab America Foundation, making him the first sitting U.S. President to do so; and

WHEREAS, At least 40 States and territories and numerous cities have taken steps to recognize April as Arab American Heritage Month; and

WHEREAS, The incredible contributions and heritage of Arab Americans have helped us build a better Detroit and a better Nation; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED, That the Detroit City Council recognizes April as Arab American Heritage Month.

