



Resolution in Support of the Portland City Council's Consideration of an Action to Submit a Charter Amendment to Allow Non-Citizen Legal Residents to Vote in Municipal Election to Portland Voters in November 2018

WHEREAS: 13.3% of Portland nearly 70,000 residents are foreign-born; and

WHEREAS: Although there are no accurate numbers of how many non-citizens have children enrolled in Portland's public schools, approximately 25% of PPS's students are English learners and almost one third come from a home where a language other than English is spoken; and

WHEREAS: Citizenship has not always been required for the right to vote in the United States. For a 150 year period in our nation's history, non-citizen residents could vote. 22 states and territories allowed non-citizen residents to vote and even to hold political office during the 19th century and the first three decades of the 20th century until the anti-non-citizen resident backlash following World War I; and

WHEREAS: Non-citizen resident households in the United States paid an *estimated \$325 billion* in taxes to federal, state and local governments -- from property, sales and income taxes according to Immigration Impact

WHEREAS: Non-citizen residents have fought in every major American war and have at times been subject to the draft. in 2015 more than 2400,000 non-citizens were serving in the U.S. Armed Forces and almost 100,000 veterans were not naturalized citizens; and

WHEREAS: Over the last 30 years, U.S. jurisdictions in the states of Maryland, New York, Illinois, Massachusetts and California have permitted non-citizen voting rights; and

WHEREAS: Globally at least 45 countries allow non-citizen resident voting at some level, including *Barbados, Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Uruguay*; and

WHEREAS: Non-citizen residents who want to become citizens face significant bureaucratic challenges, waiting a minimum of five years to obtain a green card and up to 25 years by some estimates to go through the process to become citizens;

WHEREAS: This waiting time for many non-citizen parents lasts the duration of their children's tenure in public schools; and

WHEREAS: Non-citizen resident parents' children, many of whom themselves are citizens, benefit with more participation in the democratic process; and

WHEREAS: The Portland Public Schools are committed to increasing family engagement in the educational programming; and

WHEREAS: The district's "Portland Promise" explicitly commits the district to increasing parent engagement in order to achieve its Equity Goal; and



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WHEREAS: The Portland Public Schools motto, Prepared and Empowered, affirms our district's commitment to prepare and empower all students to pursue a productive postsecondary path including civic engagement, regardless of citizenship status; and

WHEREAS: The Portland City Council will be considering a Charter Amendment to enable legal non-citizen residents who are residents of Portland and 18 years old or older to register to vote in municipal elections; and

WHEREAS: Many non-citizen resident and civil rights organizations endorse non-citizen non-citizen resident voting and other municipalities continue to work to improve the status of non-citizen residents and to promote increased participation in our democracy.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Portland Board of Education encourages the Portland City Council to advance this Charter Amendment to Portland voters in the November 2018 election.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of Education is prepared to support the implementation of this Charter Amendment if it is approved by voters by informing families about the amendment, encouraging families to register to vote and continuing to educate students on the importance of civic participation through voting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That a copy of this resolution be delivered to the City Manager ahead of the Council's hearing on advancing the Charter Amendment to the voters; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: The Chair of the Portland Board of Education speak at the public hearing to affirm the Board's support and commitment to this issue

Adopted by the Portland Board of Public Education on August 7, 2018.

Anna Trevorrow, Chair
Portland Board of Public Education