

Proclamation

WHEREAS, the City of Durham is home to a diverse population and is committed to the human and civil rights of all of its residents as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights; and

WHEREAS, on October 20, 2003, the City of Durham adopted both the Bill of Rights Defense Resolution and the Resolution Supporting the Rights of Persons Regardless of Immigration Status; and

WHEREAS, torture is a blatant violation of human and civil rights, violating legal, faith, and ethical traditions, the U.S. Constitution, and international treaties such as the Convention against Torture, to which the U.S. is a signatory; and

WHEREAS, the non-governmental North Carolina Commission of Inquiry on Torture (NCCIT) was held on November 30 and December 1 of this year to examine the role of North Carolina's airports, specifically those in Johnston County and at the Global Transpark which were used by Aero Contractors, Ltd., for its participation in the United States' secret, global torture program, launched soon after September 11, 2001, and will continue to investigate the testimony of its 20 witnesses with a view toward a full report to be issued in 2018; and

WHEREAS, according to witnesses at the NCCIT hearings, a 2005 investigation by the New York Times and a 2012 UNC School of Law report, Aero Contractors, an aviation front company established by the CIA in 1979 at the Johnston County Airport in Smithfield, undertook a leading role in transporting detainees to secret, indefinite detention and torture, and was responsible for the rendition to torture at CIA black sites of a minimum of 33 detainees, and for the rendition of at least 15 others to foreign governments known to torture; and

WHEREAS, when governments fail to act, citizens have both a duty and an opportunity to do so, and citizen-led inquiries have a long and honorable history, in North Carolina and beyond, of exposing human rights abuses and creating momentum for accountability and redress.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Stephen M. Schewel, Mayor of Durham, North Carolina, do hereby proclaim December 18, 2017, as

“HUMAN RIGHTS DAY AND BILL OF RIGHTS DAY”

in Durham, and hereby urge all citizens to take special note of this observance and reaffirm our support of the Bill of Rights and of the civil liberties it guarantees to all residents of Durham and of North Carolina, and further to take special note of the work of the North Carolina Commission of Inquiry on Torture, a non-profit organization created to address the issue of North Carolina's role in secret detention and torture and to craft a model of accountability that can inspire similar efforts elsewhere.

Witness my hand and the corporate seal of the City of Durham, North Carolina, this the 18th day of December, 2017.



Stephen M. Schewel

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