

Proclamation

Human Rights and Bill of Rights Day

WHEREAS, the City of Durham is home to a diverse population, including students, working people, and retirees, citizens and non-citizens, 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 is now being established to examine the role of some North Carolinians in the United States' secret, global torture program, launched soon after 9/11/2001; and

WHEREAS, according to the Senate Intelligence Committee's report on CIA torture, some North Carolinians played a significant role in the torture program through the operations of Aero Contractors, an aviation front company established by the CIA in 1979 at the Johnston County Airport in Smithfield which, after 9/11/2001, undertook a leading role in transporting detainees to secret detention and torture; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. government, the state of North Carolina, and political subdivisions of this state have failed to acknowledge or repair the harms created by the secret detention and torture program, even though impunity compounds those harms and allows their repetition; 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, William V. "Bill" Bell, Mayor of the City of Durham, North Carolina, do hereby proclaim that the Durham City Council declares itself in support of the North Carolina Commission of Inquiry on Torture (NCCIT), a 501(c)(3), non-profit organization described at www.nccit.org, 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 19th day of December 2016.



William V. "Bill" Bell
Mayor