



Board of Aldermen
 City of Somerville
 Massachusetts

SOMERVILLE SANCTUARY CITY RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Whereas, the United States has historically served as a haven for refugees of religious and political persecution, and

Whereas, many thousands of refugees from around the world are currently fleeing from the violence and human rights violations that persist in their countries, and have come to the U.S. in search of safe haven, and

Whereas, many persecuted people, particularly from Central America, Haiti, Brazil and Ireland have come to Somerville where they have become productive members of our community, and

Whereas, the concept of observing basic human rights and providing aid to victims of conflict is mandated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Geneva Conventions, and customary international law, and

Whereas, the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 established an asylum status which can be granted at the discretion of the federal government to any refugee, defined as a person "who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside his or her country of nationality and is unwilling or unable to avail him/herself of the protection of that country", and

Whereas, the United States has granted Extended Voluntary Departure (temporary suspension of deportation) to nationals of Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Poland and Uganda, but has denied it to Salvadorans and Guatemalans through the recent congressional defeat of the Moakley-DeConcini bill, and

Whereas, in response to this situation, some 350 religious communities across the nation, including one here in Somerville, have elected to provide sanctuary to refugees from Central America, in the belief that they are acting in accordance with international and federal law, and

Whereas, 19 cities, including our neighbors in Cambridge and Brookline, and the state of Wisconsin have declared themselves as sanctuaries, cities and states of refuge for the oppressed, and

Whereas, the city of Somerville has a diverse cultural heritage and multi-national population, of which the City is proud, and has historically welcomed newcomers, and

Whereas, Governor Dukakis of Massachusetts in his Executive Order of 10/85 has affirmed the rights of equal access to services for all people living in the Commonwealth, regardless of citizenship or residency status, and

Whereas, the Board of Aldermen does not wish to expend City resources, beyond the requirements of federal law, therefore be it

Resolved, that the City of Somerville is hereby declared to be a City of Refuge and Sanctuary for oppressed people, particularly those from El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Brazil and Ireland and that they shall be afforded all rights and privileges offered and supplied to all people residing or working in the City; and be it further

Resolved, that the Board of Aldermen recognizes there is no law which requires city departments and employees to provide the INS information regarding the residency status of any individual in the city; and be it further

Resolved, that no City Employee or department will make the provision of Somerville services or benefits conditional upon immigration status unless required to do so by Statute, federal regulation or court decisions; and be it further

Resolved, that the City Clerk will communicate this resolution to all City departments, to the Massachusetts congressional delegation, to the local and national directors of the INS, and to President Ronald Reagan; and be it further

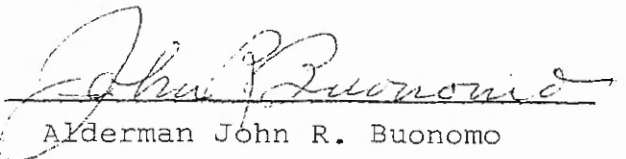
Resolved, that the City Clerk will communicate to the Congressional delegation representing the citizens of Somerville in the U.S. Congress our demand that the Congress require non-discriminatory compliance with the Refugee Act of 1980; and be it further

Resolved, that the City of Somerville does hereby express its support for the Moakley-DeConcini bill during this congressional session; and be it further

Resolved, that if a court of law should declare any part of this resolution to be contrary to any statute, federal regulation or judicial decision, the validity of the remainder of this resolution shall not be affected; and be it further

Resolved, that the City of Somerville invites other U.S. cities, particularly our neighboring cities of Massachusetts, to join in the offer of sanctuary, so that the United States of America may serve as a friend to the suffering; and be it further

Resolved that this resolution shall cease to be effective as on July 1, 1989 unless extended by this Board of Aldermen.


Alderman John R. Buonomo

Alderman John M. Connolly

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Submitted by Ald. Buonomo
Resolution

Somerville Sanitary Res.
as amended.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN.

~~THE~~ APR 23 1987

Adopted, as amended

James Bonnar
Temporary Clerk

Record Ald. Campaign Mo

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Elyse P. Brown
MAY 1987