

SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION NO. RS2025-1033

A resolution commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Sister Cities partnership between Nashville and Davidson County, the Capital of the State of Tennessee, and Belfast, the Capital of Northern Ireland.

WHEREAS, the Sister Cities initiative was inaugurated in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to establish friendship and understanding between the people of the United States and other nations through person-to-person exchange; and

WHEREAS, in furtherance of these goals, the citizens of Nashville and Davidson County, the capital of Tennessee, United States of America, and the citizens of Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland, declared their commitment to fostering mutual understanding and building a future of peace and freedom by creating enduring friendships; and

WHEREAS, our citizens have enjoyed reciprocal exchanges in all domains and in particular, the areas of business, tourism, culture and arts, law, government, and education, particularly at the university level; and

WHEREAS, this commitment has been fulfilled through a variety of meaningful partnerships and projects including the "Nashville in Belfast" celebrations, showcasing Nashville's unique culture and music; and

WHEREAS, Irish music festivals have been supported in Nashville, further highlighting the rich cultural connections between the two cities; and

WHEREAS, Nashville welcomed Rev. Bill Shaw, fostering interfaith dialogue and discussions on conflict resolution; and

WHEREAS, culinary and music students from universities in Belfast were hosted in Nashville, promoting academic and artistic collaboration; and

WHEREAS, a delegation led by the Lord Mayor of Belfast was hosted in Nashville in 2017, strengthening civic and governmental ties; and

WHEREAS, the Vice Chancellor and 20 instructors from Queens University were welcomed to Vanderbilt and Belmont Universities, fostering academic cooperation; and

WHEREAS, Nashville assisted Invest Northern Ireland in exploring economic development opportunities, furthering business collaboration; and

WHEREAS, Ulster University exchange students were hosted in Nashville, reinforcing educational exchanges; and

WHEREAS, multiple delegations were coordinated to Belfast, including all the heads of Tennessee Board of Regents colleges and at least two business-oriented delegations; and

WHEREAS, Nashville hosted the CEO of Cinemagic, supporting youth education in film and the arts; and

WHEREAS, Nashville assisted a BBC Northern Ireland reporter during the CMA Festival, showcasing Nashville's cultural impact; and

WHEREAS, our citizens have enjoyed reciprocal exchanges in conflict resolution, music, culture, arts, government, economic development, and education, strengthening ties between our cities; and

WHEREAS, this significant milestone will be honored by convening a joint symposium hosted by Belmont and Fisk Universities in Nashville and Queens University in Belfast, focusing on peace, reconciliation, civil rights, and lessons derived from our shared histories; and

WHEREAS, this gathering will engage hundreds of individuals, businesses, and organizations in both Belfast and Nashville to celebrate and strengthen this important partnership; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper for the Metropolitan Council to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of this robust sister city partnership and treaty, originally signed on May 22, 1995, by Phil Bredesen, Mayor of Nashville, and Hugh Smythe, Lord Mayor of Belfast; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Government, through the Metropolitan Council, recognizes and supports this partnership in the hope that it will continue to grow, building lasting friendships between the people of Nashville, Tennessee, and Belfast, Northern Ireland, and encouraging continued cooperation in culture and the arts, education, government, and economic development.

~~WHEREAS, the international Sister Cities initiative, established during President Eisenhower's 1956 White House Conference on Citizen Diplomacy, seeks to foster friendship and understanding between the United States and other nations through person-to-person diplomacy and the celebration of cultural diversity; and~~

~~WHEREAS, in alignment with this vision, the citizens of Nashville, Tennessee, and Belfast, Northern Ireland, have committed to working together to cultivate mutual understanding and ensuring a future peace and freedom through the creation of global friendships; and~~

~~WHEREAS, in the early 1990s, Sister Cities of Nashville's Board President, Jimmy Webb, collaborated with Ian and Katherine Brick to establish a relationship with Belfast in an effort to promote peace in Belfast and rebuild a social foundation for its youth; and~~

~~WHEREAS, the work led to a youth exchange program that encouraged teenagers of both Catholic and Protestant faiths to come to Nashville and live and work together to overcome the bias against each other that prevailed in Belfast; and~~

~~WHEREAS, Sister Cities expanded the partnership between Nashville and Belfast, which has grown to include annual Belfast Nashville Music Festival, professional exchanges; and cultural and historical tours; and~~

~~WHEREAS, the two cities established more connections through its high schools and colleges, including Vanderbilt University, Belmont University and Queens University of Belfast, and~~

~~WHEREAS, the two cities celebrated the 30-year anniversary in 2024, when Belfast held a Nashville 2 Belfast festival and Nashville residents visited Belfast to learn about its history and culture; and~~

~~WHEREAS, it is fitting and proper that the Metropolitan Council recognize and support this ongoing partnership, with the aspiration that it will continue to strengthen and foster lasting friendships between the citizens of Nashville and Belfast.~~

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. The Metropolitan County Council hereby goes on record as recognizing the 30th anniversary of the Sister Cities partnership between Nashville and Belfast, celebrating the achievements of the past thirty years, and reaffirming a commitment to strengthening this important relationship. ~~Partner City Agreement between Nashville and Belfast, Northern Ireland.~~

Section 2. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.

SPONSORED BY:

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Members of Council