Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Details (With Text)

File #:	RS2021-868	**Name:**	
Type:	Resolution	**Status:**	Passed
File created:	3/5/2021	**In control:**	Metropolitan Council
On agenda:	4/6/2021	**Final action:**	4/6/2021
Title:	A Resolution expressing opposition to any efforts by the Tennessee General Assembly to prohibit an athlete from peacefully protesting before or during a collegiate sporting event.		
Sponsors:	Sharon Hurt, Emily Benedict, Ginny Welsch, Gloria Hausser, Zulfat Suara, Brandon Taylor		
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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
4/7/2021	1	Mayor	approved	
4/6/2021	1	Metropolitan Council	adopted	
4/6/2021	1	Rules, Confirmations, and Public Elections Committee	approved	
3/30/2021	1	Metropolitan Council	filed	

A Resolution expressing opposition to any efforts by the Tennessee General Assembly to prohibit an athlete from peacefully protesting before or during a collegiate sporting event.

WHEREAS, on February 16, 2021, members of the East Tennessee State University men's basketball team peacefully protested during "The Star-Spangled Banner" by kneeling before a game at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, days after this peaceful and respectful show of solidarity by the ETSU men's basketball team, a letter signed by 27 Tennessee state senators was sent to the Chancellors and Presidents of public universities across the state; and

WHEREAS, in this letter, these state senators encouraged officials at these universities to adopt policies to prohibit kneeling during "The Star-Spangled Banner" at sporting events, encouraging these institutions of higher education to curtail the rights guaranteed to its students by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution; and

WHEREAS, for several years, athletes have chosen to kneel during the National Anthem to call attention to the issues of racial inequality in the United States and police brutality against people of color; and

WHEREAS, the First Amendment guarantees the right to free speech, which includes not only words but expressions, including kneeling; and

WHEREAS, kneeling during "The Star-Spangled Banner" is intended to make a specific protest against racism in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the third stanza of "The Star-Spangled Banner" states "No refuge could save the hireling and slave from the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave. And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave

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o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave”; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee’s public colleges and universities should continue to respect and encourage the exercise of free speech by its students, including student athletes; and

WHEREAS, if the Tennessee General Assembly seeks to chill the free speech of athletes at institutions of higher learning in Tennessee, these athletes should consider seeking admission at institutions and in states where the Freedom of Speech is respected and protected; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Council opposes the letter sent by Tennessee state senators and instead recognizes the rights of all student athletes to peacefully protest.

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 expressing opposition to any efforts by the Tennessee General Assembly to prohibit an athlete from peacefully protesting before or during a collegiate sporting event.

Section 2. The Metropolitan Clerk is directed to send a copy of this Resolution to each member of the Davidson County Delegation to the Tennessee General Assembly.

Section 3. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.