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RESOLUTION NO.: 2021-044

Encouraging Governor Henry McMaster to request the U.S. Department of the Treasury to release South Carolina's allocation of appropriated funds from the Homeowner Assistance Fund, authorized through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021

WHEREAS, the City of Columbia, and communities throughout South Carolina, continue to experience financial hardships because of the coronavirus pandemic; and,

WHEREAS, South Carolinians are struggling to remain in their homes while they search for new employment or wait to get back to work; and,

WHEREAS, Week 26 of the U.S. Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey found 30% of South Carolinians reported difficulty paying for usual household expenses as a result of COVID-19; and almost 16% of the South Carolinians who are behind on their housing payments were likely facing eviction or foreclosure in the next two months; and,

WHEREAS, this Council believes that foreclosing on residents during the coronavirus pandemic would be contrary to the health safety and welfare of the community citizens; and,

WHEREAS, by Resolution No.: R-2007-015 enacted on June 6, 2007, the City of Columbia pledge support to the National Call to Action for Affordable Housing Through Regulatory Reform by creating an Affordable Housing Task Force to address barriers preventing residents from accessing or maintaining affordable housing; and,

WHEREAS, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau issued a report on March 1, 2021 concluding that nationwide: 2.1 million families are behind at least three months of mortgage payments; homeowners owe an estimated \$90 billion in missed payments; and the last time this many families were behind on their mortgages was during the Great Recession; and,

WHEREAS, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 appropriated \$9.96 billion for the Homeowner Assistance Fund to support programs to prevent foreclosures and preserve homeownership for households experiencing financial hardship after January 21, 2020; and,

WHEREAS, the Homeowner Assistance Fund can be used for a variety of purposes, such as: mortgage payment and other financial assistance to reinstate a mortgage following forbearance, delinquency or default; reductions in principal or interest rate; homeowner's insurance, flood insurance and mortgage insurance; and other assistance needed to promote housing stability for homeowners; and,

WHEREAS, states must request allocations to receive them, and must do so within forty-five (45) days of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021's enactment, which was signed into law on March 11, 2021; and,

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of the Treasury will allocate grants based on a state's relative share of unemployment, delinquent mortgagors, and mortgages in foreclosure; and,

WHEREAS, each state will receive a minimum allocation of \$50 million from the Homeowner Assistance Fund; and,

WHEREAS, the Homeowner Assistance Fund is dedicated to a part of the housing continuum that has not received significant aid within South Carolina since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic; and,

WHEREAS, recognizing the significant impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic fallout on families struggling to stay in their homes, the South Carolina Association of Habitat for Humanity collaborated with 85 nonprofit organizations and associations to support the Homeowner Assistance Fund; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Columbia believes that the Homeowner Assistance Fund provides a critical resource for helping homeowners work out sustainable mortgage and repayment options and keep their homes until they can get back on their feet; NOW THEREFORE,


BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Columbia, South Carolina this 20th day of April, 2021, that the City Council of the City of Columbia respectfully requests that Governor Henry McMaster and the South Carolina General Assembly request allocations from the U.S. Department of Treasury within forty-five (45) days of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021's enactment so that homeowners who have experienced the greatest hardships during the coronavirus pandemic will have access to this much needed aid to prevent foreclosure, create sustainable payment options, and get back on their feet; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Columbia respectfully requests that the South Carolina General Assembly and Governor Henry McMaster provide in the 2021-2022 state budget funding to support the implementation of the Homeowner Assistance Fund, which was allocated to South Carolina through the authorization of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Columbia respectfully requests that the South Carolina General Assembly and Governor Henry McMaster prioritize the appropriation of the Homeowner Assistance Fund to ensure the resources are available to lower income homeowners who have been financially impacted by the coronavirus pandemic beginning no later than July 2021.

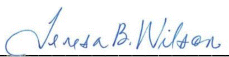
Requested by:

Councilmember Devine _____



Mayor

Approved by:



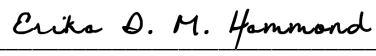
City Manager

Approved as to form:



City Attorney

ATTEST:



City Clerk

Introduced: 4/20/2021
Final Reading: 4/20/2021