

RESOLUTION NO. RS2018-1120

A resolution expressing the support of the Metropolitan Council for employees of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County to pursue and maintain public union representation, and further urging the United States Supreme Court to uphold the integrity of public unions in deciding the matter of *Janus v. AFSCME*.

WHEREAS, it is the firm belief and conviction of the Metropolitan Council that all Nashvillians should have the means to thrive in safe and healthy communities; and

WHEREAS, working people of Nashville who truly make the city run ought to have good jobs that can support families; and

WHEREAS, according to the Economic Policy Institute, working people have become more productive over the past forty (40) years than ever before; yet at the same time, real wages are declining and CEO pay at major U.S. companies has risen more than ever before -- 347 times more than the average person, according to the AFL-CIO Executive Paywatch; and

WHEREAS, fifty years ago, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, where he had marched and rallied in support of city sanitation workers who were on strike to demand their dignity, their humanity, and that their labor union be recognized; and

WHEREAS, the Memphis sanitation workers and Dr. King had carried signs proclaiming, "I AM A MAN" in their struggle for basic freedoms, including the freedom from discrimination, the freedom from degrading work conditions, and the freedom to assemble in strong unions to improve their place of work; and

WHEREAS, still today, people across the country and in our city struggle for those same basic freedoms and a high quality of life for their families; and

WHEREAS, being able to assemble together in unions provides people -- particularly women and people of color -- with a powerful voice to speak up for themselves, their families, and their communities, and ensures they are treated with dignity and respect at work; and

WHEREAS, when people stick together in unions, they gain the power in numbers to raise wages and improve benefits, such as health care for workers and their families, and all of our communities; and

WHEREAS, people working collectively together in unions have achieved significant victories and benefits, including the 40-hour work week, overtime pay, and health and safety standards, as well as advanced policies especially important to women such as paid leave, earned sick time, and reducing the gender pay gap; and

WHEREAS, when people can negotiate collectively for strong contracts, higher wages, and safer, dignified working conditions, everyone benefits; communities are made stronger; and the entire economy is made more fair; and

WHEREAS, the United States Supreme Court is currently considering the case of *Janus v. AFSCME Council 37* which may decide whether those who work in the public service sector -- such as nurses, teachers and

firefighters -- will be denied the freedom to assemble in strong unions that make our communities safe, more equitable, and strong; and

WHEREAS, an unfavorable decision in the *Janus* case would undermine the freedoms of millions of working people, especially women and communities of color to join together in strong public unions; and

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County provides services for all of its residents because of the hard work of employees who work in public service, providing health care, educating children, putting out fires, fixing potholes, picking up trash, and much more; and

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

Section 1: That the Metropolitan Council hereby goes on record as expressing its support of the freedom of all public employees to exercise their rights to a voice and dignity on the job by joining together in strong public unions.

Section 2: That the Metropolitan Council hereby further goes on record as urging the United States Supreme Court to consider the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Memphis sanitation workers, as well as the public benefit created by workers organizing collectively, in rendering its decision in the matter of *Janus v. AFSCME* -- a decision which may have a monumental impact upon residents of Nashville and Davidson County.

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

INTRODUCED BY:

Tanaka Vercher
Member of Council