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Chairman Phil Mendelson
at the request of the Mayor

A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to amend the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 to require the District of Columbia Board of Elections to operate no less than eighty polling places during the November 3, 2020, general election.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Open Polling Places Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2020”.

Sec. 2. (a) There exists a need to amend the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 to require the District of Columbia Board of Elections to operate no less than 80 polling places during the November 3, 2020, general election.

(b) On June 2, 2020, the District of Columbia Board of Elections conducted the District’s primary election.

(c) Prior to June 2, 2020 the Board of Elections encouraged the use of early voting and mail-in ballots. However, many residents chose to exercise their constitutionally protected right to vote in-person either by preference or because of demonstrated concerns with the mail-in ballot process, such as adequate tracking of their request,

1 failing to receive their ballot by mail, or receive confirmation of their mail-in ballot being
2 received by the Board.

3 (d) The Board of Elections did not adequately plan for the level of in-person
4 voting, decided not to open all of their polling places and in fact drastically reduced the
5 number of open polling places on June 2, 2020.

6 (e) As a result of the limited number of polling places, District voters were made
7 to wait hours in unacceptably long lines, with many still waiting to vote past midnight the
8 following day.

9 (f) To ensure maximum voter turnout and that all District voters have an
10 unfettered opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to vote it is necessary that the
11 Board of Elections operate no less than 80 polling places during the November 3, 2020
12 general election.

13 (g) Moreover, opening no less than 80 polling places will instill confidence in the
14 voters that they are able to appropriately socially distance themselves from others at
15 polling places.

16 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the
17 circumstances enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it
18 necessary that the District of Columbia Election Code of 1955 be amended to require the
19 District of Columbia Board of Elections to operate no less than 80 polling places during
20 the November 3, 2020, general election.

21 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.