

**RESOLUTION ENSURING VOTER ACCESS AND EMPOWERMENT AND MITIGATING
NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY RESIDENTS OF THE VOTING
RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED BY SENATE BILL 202**

WHEREAS, during the 2020 General Election and General Election Runoff for Federal Offices, the residents of the State of Georgia and Athens-Clarke County exercised their right to vote in overwhelming numbers, leading to historical results; and

WHEREAS, in the wake of the 2020 elections various unsubstantiated allegations of fraud were made, and the election results were unsuccessfully challenged in the courts; and

WHEREAS, recounts and audits of the 2020 elections showed the accuracy and integrity of the election results; and

WHEREAS on January 2, 2021, defeated Presidential candidate Donald Trump made a phone call to Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensberger in an attempt to persuade him to overturn the legitimate election of Joseph R. Biden in the state of Georgia; and

WHEREAS, nonetheless, members of the Georgia General Assembly in the 2021 session introduced several bills claiming to address a lack of security and fairness in the election by imposing new restrictions and barriers to voting access; and

WHEREAS, on March 25, 2021, Governor Brian Kemp signed into law Senate Bill 202, termed the "Election Integrity Act of 2021 , " which makes sweeping changes to voting laws in the state; and

WHEREAS, these changes include empowering state officials to take over local election boards, limiting the use of ballot drop boxes, and imposing new voter identification requirements and limitations for the use of absentee ballots; and

WHEREAS, these voting restrictions will disproportionately impact residents in cities and counties with high density populations, including Athens-Clarke County, and will impose barriers to their ability to vote; and

WHEREAS, our elections should be overseen by a local Board of Elections made up of local residents who know and understand this community; and

WHEREAS, during his lifetime the great Congressman John Lewis reminded us through his words and actions that "the right to vote is precious, almost sacred"; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of this Mayor and Commission to take appropriate action within our powers to ensure that Athens-Clarke County residents shall have every opportunity to exercise their right to vote; and

WHEREAS, accordingly, the Mayor and Commission hereby direct the County Manager to consult with the Board of Elections and Registration and the County Attorney's Office to develop a plan of action to mitigate the impact on Athens-Clarke County residents of the voting restrictions imposed by Senate Bill 202;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY MAYOR AND COMMISSION DIRECT THAT:

SECTION 1: The County Manager shall consult with the Board of Elections and Registration and the County Attorney's Office to develop a plan of action to mitigate the impact on the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County residents of the voting restrictions imposed by Senate Bill 202.

SECTION 2: These actions shall include but not be limited to:

- a) Coordinating with the Board of Elections and Registration and other appropriate staff to roll out a voter information campaign, no later than March 1, 2022, to make easily accessible to residents of Athens-Clarke County information and resources on voter registration, general information on early, absentee, and in-person voting, and how to obtain the forms of identification required for absentee voting.
- b) Coordinating with the Board of Elections and Registration and other appropriate staff to include QR Codes or links to websites providing information regarding voter registration and absentee voting in water bills and other mailings or outlets.
- c) Working with the Board of Elections and Registration and other appropriate staff to collaborate with corporate and community partners in developing and implementing Public Service Announcements and other communications to provide clarity on new voting related deadlines and timelines.
- d) Ensuring the Board of Elections and Registration and other appropriate staff have ample assistance and resources to:
 - 1) maximize the number of, and access to, secure absentee ballot drop boxes; and
 - 2) identify a broad array of early voting locations to maximize early voting access over the available window of time.

Approved



Mayor

Attest



Clerk of Commission

Date

5-4-2021