

RESOLUTION NO. m-1192

A RESOLUTION of the Olympia City Council declaring its desire that Olympia be a City of peace and requesting that the federal government suspend the deportation of Central American refugees who have fled from persecution in their home countries.

WHEREAS, the United States supported the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the universal declaration of human rights on December 10, 1948, which commits the member states to recognize and observe basic human rights; and

WHEREAS, on August 12, 1949, the United States, El Salvador and Guatemala ratified the Geneva Convention IV, relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war; and

WHEREAS, the United States has acceded to the 1967 United Nations Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees which states:

"No contracting state shall expel or return a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories where his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion."

and

WHEREAS, the United States Refugee Act of 1980 authorizes the granting of asylum to refugees who are defined in terms identical to the 1967 United Nations Convention as any person who:

". . . owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside of the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

and

WHEREAS, the United Nations High Commission on

Refugees has declared that many people fleeing El Salvador and Guatemala are political refugees; and

WHEREAS, the United States signed the United Nations Protocol on Refugees but denies Guatemalan and Salvadoran refugees temporary safe haven and instead deports them; and

WHEREAS, the City of Olympia voters passed Proposition One in November, 1984, which calls for an end to the United States military involvement in Nicaragua and El Salvador; and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Legislature passed a Resolution calling for the granting of extended voluntary departure status to El Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees; and

WHEREAS, members of religious communities within the City of Olympia have offered sanctuary to Central American refugees believing themselves to be acting not in civil disobedience but under the law of the land; and

WHEREAS, these groups and individuals have acted in a way they consider morally and legally correct and in the best tradition of our country which is founded on the principles of providing a safe haven for those fleeing political oppression; and

WHEREAS, in a similar circumstance, Washington State recently honored people who aided Jewish refugees during the Nazi holocaust.

THE OLYMPIA CITY COUNCIL HEREBY RESOLVES that it desires to be known as a CITY OF PEACE where those politically persecuted can find safe haven and sanctuary; and


FURTHER RESOLVES and petitions the Legislature, the Governor of the State of Washington, the United States Congress and the President to take action to uphold the 1967 United Nations Convention and Protocol relating to refugees; and

FURTHER RESOLVES and urges the Immigration Service to provide El Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees with the status of "extended voluntary departure" so that they may live free of the threat of deportation until conditions allow their return home; and

FURTHER RESOLVES that it respects the various sanctuary groups and individuals for their courage, sensitivity, humanity and willingness to act in accordance with their conscience; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the United States Congress, the United States Immigration Service, the United States Department of State and the President of the United States.

DATED this 13th day of August, 1985.


MAYOR

Approved as to Form:


City Attorney

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