



City of Fairfax, Virginia

City Council Regular Meeting

Agenda Item # 7d

City Council Meeting 6/22/2021

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council

FROM: Robert A. Stalzer, City Manager *RA Stalzer*

SUBJECT: Consideration of a resolution expressing the City Council's concurrence with efforts to inform residents and the medical community regarding the risks of traveling to the People's Republic of China for organ transplants, and to raise awareness of, and express opposition to, forced organ harvesting of any kind, including state-sponsored organ harvesting from political prisoners and certain minority and religious groups

ISSUE(S): Whether to approve a resolution to express solidarity with efforts to inform the public about the risks of traveling to China for organ transplants and to express opposition to the practice of state-sponsored forced organ harvesting.

SUMMARY: Organ trafficking (both voluntary and forced) is a growing issue throughout the world, but there is increasing concern about state-sponsored forced organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience and others who do not have the ability to oppose such actions. Several local jurisdictions, including Fairfax and Prince William Counties, have either adopted resolutions or expressed concurrence with efforts to raise awareness about the risks of traveling for organ transplant purposes, and also to combat any forced organ harvesting practices. The federal government has also taken action, in 2016 through bipartisan action in the House of Representatives, and the introduction earlier this year of bicameral, and bipartisan, legislation in Congress to attempt to combat forced organ harvesting and trafficking in persons for purposes of the removal of organs. At the June 8, 2021 City Council meeting, the City Council concurred with Councilmember Yi's request to direct the City Attorney to prepare a resolution for consideration by the City Council on this topic. The attached resolution incorporates the latest available, readily accepted, information.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

RECOMMENDATION: Consider approval of the proposed resolution.

ALTERNATIVE COURSE OF ACTION: Not approve the resolution, or modify the same.

RESPONSIBLE STAFF/
POC: City Attorney

COORDINATION: None.

ATTACHMENTS: Draft Resolution; Sample Motion

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-_____

A RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE CITY COUNCIL’S CONCURRENCE WITH EFFORTS TO INFORM RESIDENTS AND THE MEDICAL COMMUNITY REGARDING THE RISKS OF TRAVELING TO THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA FOR ORGAN TRANSPLANTS, AND TO RAISE AWARENESS OF, AND EXPRESS OPPOSITION TO, FORCED ORGAN HARVESTING OF ANY KIND, INCLUDING STATE-SPONSORED FORCED ORGAN HARVESTING FROM POLITICAL PRISONERS AND CERTAIN MINORITY AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS

WHEREAS, it is commonly accepted that the global organ trafficking trade is pervasive and a large component of this practice involves the forced harvesting of organs from individuals who do not consent to such actions; and

WHEREAS, there is growing evidence that a component of such organ harvesting is state-sponsored actions to forcibly harvest organs from prisoners of conscience – specifically including acts by the government of the People’s Republic of China against political prisoners and certain minority and religious groups and organizations, such as practitioners of Falun Gong (also known as Falun Dafa), as documented by independent, non-partisan organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and tribunals, such as the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC), The China Tribunal, and Freedom House, among others; and

WHEREAS, medical “tourism” – the practice of traveling to other countries for medical procedures, including organ transplantation, is increasingly prevalent and, in the case of certain organ transplantation, the source of such organs is not readily discoverable by recipients, many of whom are unaware of information regarding the donors or whether or not the donated organ was procured voluntarily and in accordance with ethical and legal standards; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the United States House of Representatives, on a bipartisan basis, with all Northern Virginia Representatives in support, passed House Resolution 343, condemned reports that the Chinese Government was systematically and forcibly harvesting organs from certain prisoners of conscience; and

WHEREAS, in March of 2021, bipartisan legislation was introduced in Congress to combat forced organ harvesting, in the form of the “Stop Forced Organ Harvesting Act,” which legislation is pending at this time; and

WHEREAS, several other Northern Virginia jurisdictions, including Fairfax and Prince William Counties, have either adopted resolutions or otherwise concurred in efforts to raise awareness of these issues, and the City Council desires to concur with the sentiments expressed by these actions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council that it stands in opposition to forced organ harvesting of any kind, specifically including, but not limited to, any state-sponsored activity in this regard and any human trafficking conducted for this purpose.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED, that City staff is hereby directed to disseminate, to the greatest extent practicable, information to City residents regarding the risks associated with travel to China for the purpose of organ transplantation as well as potential ethical, legal and health issues associated with organs procured in China and elsewhere, so that City residents may be properly informed before making any decisions in this regard.

IT IS FINALLY RESOLVED, that that City staff is directed to provide a copy of this resolution to the Governor of Virginia and the Fairfax Health Department.

Adopted this 22nd day of June, 2021.

Councilmember Harmon _____
Councilmember Lim _____
Councilmember Miller _____
Councilmember Ross _____
Councilmember Stehle _____
Councilmember Yi _____

Mayor

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK

SAMPLE MOTION

“I MOVE THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT THE PRESENTED RESOLUTION, AS ATTACHED TO THE STAFF REPORT, REGARDING FORCED ORGAN HARVESTING AND THE RISKS OF TRAVELING TO THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA FOR ORGAN TRANSPLANTS .”