WHEREAS, in September 2018, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution establishing an Equity Policy and a Racial Equity Office to spearhead and oversee the mission of the Equity Policy; and,

WHEREAS, the rationale for the policy is the recognition that, “many current inequities are sustained by historical legacies, structures, and systems that repeat patterns of exclusion. Without the intentionality stated in this Policy, inequitable outcomes linked to race, socio-economic status, and other identities will persist”; and,

WHEREAS, the mission of the Policy “is for all aspects of county government to address and implement strategies that target inequities that exist within the County organization, inclusive of all its services, resulting in equitable outcomes for all residents”; and,

WHEREAS, in January 2019, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution titled “A Proclamation Declaring January 22, 2019 As A Day of Racial Healing” based on the recognition of a continued racial divide and that we must consciously work to heal the wounds created by racial, ethnic and religious bias to build an equitable and just society; and,

WHEREAS, in July 2020, the Washtenaw County Commission took the extraordinary step of unanimously passing a resolution that declared racism as a public health crisis due to the experienced public health disparities like life expectancy, infant mortality and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black and brown communities; and,

WHEREAS, in passing the resolution, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners recognized that despite the deliberate steps Washtenaw County has taken to address these inequities, racism continues to plague our communities and that more can be done; and,

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners unanimously passed a resolution opposing and advocating against those voter suppression bills; and,

WHEREAS, these laws make it disproportionately harder for Black and working-class people to vote by design;

WHEREAS, many Michigan-based corporations have made strong public statements in support of Black Lives Matter, signed the Declaration of War on Racism, and signed a joint statement opposing voter suppression bills previously vetoed by the Governor;

WHEREAS, it is understood that companies make political contributions for their own business reasons, including entities that are recipients of large contracts with
Washtenaw County. However, at times these contributions go to elected officials who supported voter suppression bills in 2021 and are actively supporting ongoing efforts to make them law. Therefore, these corporations are supporting voter suppression efforts, even if unintentionally; and,

WHEREAS, defending our democracy and civil rights is not a partisan issue;

WHEREAS, on July 19th, 2022 the Wayne County Commission passed a resolution calling on businesses located in Wayne County or doing business with Wayne County, to align their political spending with values that promote free and fair access to the democratic process;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners reaffirm our commitment to defending our democracy and civil rights.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners instructs County Administration to review County procurement and purchasing policies regarding the political activity of vendors, such as advocacy efforts and political contributions, to identify potential policy changes or new policies to ensure vendors reflect the values of Washtenaw County government related to the importance of protecting a free and fair democracy and civil rights.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners instructs County Administration to review and make necessary policy recommendations to ensure adequate transparency in our contracts to understand how vendors and potential vendors value and actively are prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion to better understand how our county dollars are impacting these issues at the community level.