

*In the Year Two Thousand Twenty-Three*

Upon the recommendation of Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra, Councilor Rachel Maiore and Councilor Stanley Moulton III

R.23.252 A Resolution in Support of the Annual Observance of COVID-19 Remembrance Day

**WHEREAS**, the first Monday in March is an appropriate day to be designated as COVID-19 Victims and Survivors Memorial Day; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) is an illness caused by a virus that can transmit from person to person and has spread across the world creating a global pandemic and having catastrophic effects on human life, our community, and our economy; and

**WHEREAS**, in March 2020, communities everywhere began to experience increased loss of life and families lost parents, siblings, children, other relatives, friends and neighbors from the virus; and

**WHEREAS**, many people across the Commonwealth and the United States continue to be personally impacted by COVID-19, including suffering from the long-term health implications of the virus; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 6.8 million people worldwide and 1.1 million people in the United States have lost their lives due to COVID-19, and, in Northampton alone, 7,137 cases of COVID-19 were reported as of Feb. 4, 2023, including 113 lives lost to this deadly virus; and

**WHEREAS**, in response to the rapid spread of COVID-19, front-line and essential workers and health-care professionals took selfless action to protect their neighbors and communities and find innovative ways to provide services and save lives; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on low-income communities and communities of color, rural and tribal communities, people with disabilities, people with weakened immune systems, unhoused individuals, and those living in congregate settings such as long-term care facilities and prisons — exacerbating systemic inequities and social determinants of health; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on the Native American community, with Native Americans losing over 6 years life expectancy (1), and has caused the incalculable loss of elders who carried with them the communities' cultures, languages, traditions; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 has been an insidious disease for veterans, including five from Northampton who lost their lives at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home in one of the worst outbreaks during the early weeks of the pandemic. The impact has been especially difficult for those veterans

struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder (2), because of the increased social isolation and disrupted access to mental health services; and

**WHEREAS**, COVID-19 has harmed the health and well-being of children by delaying access to care and health services, disrupting schooling, undermining their sense of safety and security, increasing stress on caregivers, and tragically robbing millions of children of a parent or caregiver; and

**WHEREAS**, each life lost to COVID-19, each inequity brought to light, and each sacrifice made shall never be forgotten; and

**WHEREAS**, 185 other cities and towns across the country recognize COVID-19 Remembrance Day; and

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Northampton recognizes the first Monday of each March as COVID-19 Remembrance Day, in recognition of those who died as a result of pandemic and the suffering of those who survived but carry the long-term impacts of this virus.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that COVID-19 Remembrance Day acknowledges the front-line and essential workers who provided services to our community, and the selfless actions of hundreds of volunteers who stepped up to help support relief efforts for their neighbors.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City of Northampton urges local residents to continue taking preventive measures as appropriate, to protect vulnerable members of the community and to mitigate spread of this virus, in tribute to essential workers and those who rose in service to protect the public.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the City of Northampton urges the Massachusetts state legislature to move with all deliberate speed and urgency to pass [HD.3821](#), Resolutions establishing the annual observance of COVID-19 Remembrance Day (3); and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the administrative assistant to the City Council shall send a copy of this resolution to: Congressman James P. McGovern, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Edward Markey, Governor Maura Healey, Senate President Karen Spilka, House Speaker Ronald Mariano. State Senator Jo Comerford and State Representative Lindsay Sadosa.

- (1) National Institutes of Health: “Life Expectancy Loss among Native Americans during the COVID-19 Pandemic” (revised June 13, 2022)
- (2) U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: “Effects of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic on PTSD”

(3) The 193rd General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: HD 3821:  
Resolutions establishing the annual observance of COVID-19 Remembrance Day;  
<https://malegislature.gov/Bills/193/HD3821>