

News Release

Oakland County is a Welcoming County and joins Welcoming Michigan initiative

Miller leads effort to join campaign to affirm Oakland County is a place that respects the dignity and value of all people, including immigrants

April 10, 2019, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI. – Oakland County Commissioner **William Miller** (D-Farmington) is proposing a resolution to designate Oakland County as a Welcoming County and that it join the Welcoming Michigan initiative. The resolution asserts that a community and its leadership recognize and value the contributions of all its residents, including immigrants and refugees. Oakland County has the highest percentage (12.4%) of foreign born residents of any county in the state. In Oakland County, Ferndale, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak, Troy and West Bloomfield Township have already passed Welcoming Resolutions, and Commissioner Miller is working with his colleagues on the Board to pass one at the county level.

“I wholeheartedly believe that all people are created equal,” said Miller. “We have all walked different paths and had different life experiences or challenges. I believe every person deserves equity, dignity and respect. The purpose of this resolution is to affirm that Oakland County is truly a place where all people can live, work, play, raise their families and thrive in a genuinely welcoming and inclusive community.”

“With this resolution we declare Oakland County is a welcoming community for everyone,” said Chairman **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak). “The next step is to live up to it – through the policies we adopt, priorities we advance and decisions we make. And we intend to accomplish this.”

In addition to affirming the innate dignity of all people, Miller’s resolution recognizes that the contributions of immigrants are vital to the shared prosperity of the county and its residents. The measure states that creating a welcoming environment for all people, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or place of origin, “enhances Oakland County’s cultural fabric, economic growth, and overall wellbeing and prosperity for current and future generations.” Further, it encourages all Oakland County businesses, civic groups, schools, government agencies and other community institutions to undertake their own initiatives to create a neighborly and welcoming environment for newcomers from other countries.

According to Welcoming Michigan, which has worked on fostering mutual respect and understanding among immigrants and receiving communities since 2011, there are 20 cities and counties statewide that have publicly committed to making their communities more welcoming and inclusive, and they hope to see that number continue to grow. The organization believes that passing a Welcoming Resolution makes an important statement about a community's values and beliefs, and demonstrates its commitment to welcoming others from different countries, embracing diversity and uplifting the innate human dignity all people share.

“We are so excited the County is taking this important step,” said Christine Sauvé, Welcoming Michigan Director. “The Welcoming Resolution tells newcomers and longtime residents alike that they have a place in Oakland County and that they belong. We applaud the County's commitment to creating a community that works together for a shared future, and we look forward to partnering with the County to achieve this vision.”

Yesterday, the Board's Economic Growth & Infrastructure Committee, which is chaired by Commissioner Miller, passed the resolution and will recommend the full Board adopt it. The measure will go before the full Board of Commissioners for a vote at the next board meeting on April 18, 2019.

Commissioner Miller represents District 14, which includes the City of Farmington, Southfield Township, the villages of Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms and Franklin, and a portion of the City of Farmington Hills. He can be contacted at 313-215-6927 or via email to millerw@oakgov.com.

For more information about Welcoming Michigan, please visit www.welcomingmichigan.org or contact Christine Sauvé at 734-845-8695. More information about the Board of Commissioners is available at www.oakgov.com/boc.

###