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PROCLAMATION

OF THE PORT OF SEATTLE COMMISSION

WHEREAS, Blacks In Government (BIG), established in 1993 at the Port of Seattle, is an Employee Resource Group (ERG) dedicated to equal opportunities and professional development, and mandated per their charter to promote excellence through employee advocacy, education and community service; and
WHEREAS, during Black history month and every month of the year, the goals and objectives of BIG are:

To be an advocate of equal opportunity for blacks in government;
To eliminate practices of racism and racial discrimination against blacks in government;
To promote professionalism among blacks in government;
To develop and promote programs which will enhance ethnic pride and educational opportunities for blacks in government;
To establish a mechanism for the gathering and dissemination of information to blacks in government; and
To provide a non-partisan platform on major issues of local, regional, and national significance that affect blacks in government; and
WHEREAS, access to quality education translates to opportunities and open doors. It can be the weight that tips the scales and moves a person or family out of poverty. Quality education usually means more economic security and better quality of life; and
WHEREAS, just last week, the Seattle Times published a story about how for the first time ever, youth of color make up the majority of students in Washington public schools. Our public schools are changing, and we, as a state, need to change too; and

WHEREAS, another complex part of this change is that statewide, the percentage of Black students in our public schools is actually declining. While we may be able to account for some of this decline due to how demographic data is collected, we can't ignore the data about how Black students are treated in public schools – punished at higher rates and experiencing worse academic outcomes than other races. How we treat Black students affects how we treat all students; and
WHEREAS, we know that representation has the power to raise up the visibility and the voices of those who have historically been underrepresented, unseen and silenced; and
WHEREAS, representation on the Commission was reset with the historic election of Commissioner Hamdi Mohamed as the first Black woman to serve on the Commission and the first Somali woman elected to public office in Washington State; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Equity Diversity and Inclusion was established in 2019 to create a cultural shift at the Port of Seattle by identifying and addressing the root causes of inequities, and to deepen the Port's efforts toward equity and anti-racism and does so in partnership with ERGs like BIG; and

WHEREAS, the Port of Seattle Chapter of BIG aims to lift up the next generation through providing support and empowering students to pursue higher education through their BIG scholarship fund and initiatives like "Stuff the Bus," "Project Prom," and their portwide Fall Food, Coat and Toy Drives which collect school supplies and clothing for local families; and

WHEREAS, BIG and their allies continue to positively impact the community we all call home.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Port of Seattle Commission hereby honors and recognizes the contributions of the Port's Chapter of Blacks In Government; commits to amplifying the BIG Scholarship Fund to increase the impact of its education grants for college-bound Black students; and celebrates their many contributions to the Port of Seattle and the broader community.
Proclaimed by the Port of Seattle Commission this 14th day of February, 2023.

Port of Seattle Commission

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