

WHEREAS: Shelter is a fundamental human right; and

WHEREAS: There is a continuing housing crisis in the City of Somerville, exacerbating resident displacement, destabilizing communities, disrupting children's educations, threatening the stability of Somerville schools, undermining the health and vitality of our neighborhoods, and jeopardizing the diversity that Somervillians cherish; and

WHEREAS: This continuing housing crisis has been thoroughly investigated and documented in two recent studies commissioned by the City: the 2015 Somerville Housing Needs Assessment, and analyses performed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to inform the work and December 2015 report of the Sustainable Neighborhoods Working Group; and

WHEREAS: There is a severely limited supply of affordable housing options for persons with modest incomes, as evidenced by the fact that the Housing Division receives an average of 41 qualified applications for each affordable inclusionary rental unit; by the fact that some 3400 persons applied to participate in a housing lottery for 35 new affordable rental units at 181 Washington Street; and

WHEREAS: The current Federal funding levels for the Section 8 Housing Choice Tenant-Based Voucher Program are sorely insufficient to support all of the individuals and families in need in Massachusetts, as evidenced by the fact that the Massachusetts Centralized Waiting List exceeds 20,000 people as of January 2019, of which over 2,700 are Somerville residents; and

WHEREAS: The creation of a universal voucher program would dramatically improve the lives of millions of Americans by providing them with affordable housing, thereby allowing them to invest in food, education, job training, and savings for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS: The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimates the cost of fully funding the Section 8 Housing Choice Tenant-Based Voucher Program at \$23.1 billion, or 1.86% of the Federal Budget, which is 76.9% less than the cost of the 2018 Tax Cuts, and less than one third of the annual cost of the Mortgage Interest Tax Deduction; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED: That Somerville's City Council, in session assembled, hereby adopts this Resolution calling on our elected representatives to both houses of Congress, namely Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Edward Markey, and Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, to sponsor an amendment to the 2019 Federal Budget that would fully fund the Section 8 Housing Choice Mobile Voucher Program so that every person in need of shelter in the United States of America shall be housed.