CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
CITY COUNCIL

WILLIE BURNLEY JR.
CITY COUNCILOR AT LARGE

A Resolution in Support of Ending the U.S. Blockade of Cuba

WHEREAS: For the last 60 years, the United States has imposed an embargo on Cuba (known in Cuba as "the blockade") which prevents most engagement and trade with the United States, as well as punishes countries that engage with Cuba; and

WHEREAS: This blockade continues to inflict daily hardships onto the Cuban people by creating shortages of food, medicine, basic supplies such as toilet paper, building materials, even preventing Cuba from obtaining vital medical equipment and supplies, thus harming the Cuban people who President Biden's administration claims to support; and

WHEREAS*:* In 2017, the United Nations estimated that the blockade has cost the Cuban economy approximately $130 billion, averaging out to more than $2 billion each year; and

WHEREAS*:* the blockade has also had a detrimental impact on the social, political, and legal rights of Cubans, beyond its devastating economic toll; and

WHEREAS*:* The United Nations General Assembly voted on June 23, 2021 to condemn the U.S. embargo of Cuba – for the 29th consecutive time – with a decisive vote of 184 of 193 nations voting in favor, with only the United States and Israel opposed; and

WHEREAS, President Trump arbitrarily reinstated Cuba's designation as a State Sponsor of Terror less than a week after the January 6th attempted coup and reversed the Obama-Biden administration's 2015 decision to change its status after an exhaustive review by the State Department; and

WHEREAS: Cuba's current designation has subjected it to further international financial restrictions that limit the nation's ability to carry out critical financial transactions, including those needed to advance its efforts to combat the COVID pandemic and reboot its economy from what many are calling its most bleak period in decades; and

WHEREAS: Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley joined 117 members of Congress last year in calling for the removal of Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list and noted in a letter that "a policy of engagement with Cuba serves U.S. interests and those of the Cuban people;" and

WHEREAS: Somerville's residents, burgeoning biotech industry, as well as Tufts University would greatly benefit from the medical, academic, and cultural collaboration that would result from the normalization of ties with Cuba; and

WHEREAS: The Cities of Boston and Cambridge, as well as the town of Brookline, have already joined dozens of municipalities in calling for an end to the blockade; and

WHEREAS: President Biden has the authority to remove Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list and recommit to the effort to normalize ties with Cuba that the Obama-Biden administration began; THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED: That the Somerville City Council strongly urges President Biden to remove Cuba from the State Sponsors of Terrorism List and end the travel restrictions on U.S. residents to Cuba, and Cuban citizens to the United States

RESOLVED: That the Somerville City Council urges our congressional delegation to pass legislation that will eliminate those aspects of the blockade that have been codified into law; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED: That the Somerville City Council supports ongoing and future efforts by Tufts University and our biotech industry to pursue collaborations and exchanges with their Cuban counterparts, which are currently hampered by the designation of Cuba as a state sponsor of terror.