

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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To acknowledge the obesity epidemic in the District of Columbia, to highlight the benefits of diets high in fruits and vegetables, to encourage residents to abstain from animal products on Mondays, and to celebrate the abundance of produce grown in community gardens and in neighboring regions.

WHEREAS, the rate of adolescent obesity in the District of Columbia is the highest in the nation and nearly half of the children in some wards are overweight. Obese children and adolescents are at greater risk for cardiovascular disease, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure, bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems, such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem, and Type-2 diabetes.

WHEREAS, childhood obesity disproportionately affects low-income and minority children, and half of all minority children will develop diabetes by their eighteenth birthday.

WHEREAS, 81% of the District of Columbia’s high school students do not eat the recommended five daily servings of fruits and vegetables.

WHEREAS, the meat served to school children via the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s School Lunch Program is tested less frequently for food-borne pathogens than the meat in fast food restaurants and subject to lower safety standards.

WHEREAS, the rate of adult obesity in the District of Columbia exceeds 50 percent. Obesity is associated with an increased risk of numerous health problems, including heart disease, type-2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis.

1           WHEREAS, overweight college applicants are significantly less likely to be accepted to  
2 college despite comparable academic records, and overweight employees are more likely to  
3 experience workplace bias, including hiring and salary discrimination.

4           WHEREAS, more than 20% of District residents ages 65 and older are obese.  
5 Overweight and obese elderly are more likely to have hypertension, osteoarthritis, cardiovascular  
6 disease, diabetes, lung disease, cancer and Alzheimer’s disease.

7           WHEREAS, the environmental impacts of abstaining from meat are significant. Each  
8 time an individual goes meat free, s/he saves 890 gallons of water and nearly a gallon of  
9 gasoline. The UN has found that current meat production methods cause nearly half of all  
10 stream and river pollution. Indeed, Dr. Rajendra Pachauri, Nobel Peace Prize winner and chair  
11 of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, has stated that the easiest  
12 way to reduce one’s carbon footprint is to make one day a week meat-free.

13           WHEREAS, a growing number of people are reducing their consumption of animal  
14 products in order to prevent animal cruelty. Approximately one billion animals would be spared  
15 if animal consumption was reduced by only 10%, a figure that would be achieved by a national  
16 Meat Free Monday.

17           WHEREAS, foregoing meat has the potential to impact world hunger. Each year, 756  
18 million tons of grain is fed to farmed animals. If that grain was provided to the 1.4 billion people  
19 who are living in abject poverty, each of them would be provided twice the grain they would  
20 need to survive.

21           WHEREAS, the American Dietetic Association has stated that vegetarians have “lower  
22 rates of death from ischemic heart disease...lower blood cholesterol levels, lower blood pressure,  
23 and lower rates of hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and prostate and colon cancer” and that

1 vegetarians are less likely than meat-eaters to be obese. Accordingly, experts recommend going  
2 vegetarian, or at least increasing plant foods and eating fewer animal products, to help weight  
3 control. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of  
4 Agriculture in their Dietary Guidelines for Americans, advised that Americans eat more dark  
5 green vegetables, orange vegetables, legumes and fruits.

6 WHEREAS, today, the average person consumes nearly 200 pounds more meat per  
7 annum than the average person consumed in the 1950s.

8 WHEREAS, America’s per capita fruit consumption is “woefully low” and limited to a  
9 small range of fruit options, and vegetable consumption “tells the same story,” according to a  
10 2003 USDA report.

11 WHEREAS, community experts have said that enough fresh, local, produce exists to feed  
12 every District student. Such farm fresh products taste better, are healthy, and research has shown  
13 that children prefer them to non-local produce.

14 WHEREAS, a weekly reminder to restart healthy habits encourages success, and we are  
15 more likely to maintain behaviors begun on Monday throughout the week.

16 WHEREAS, Meat Free Mondays have been advocated by more than 20 schools of public  
17 health, numerous organizations including the American Association of Retired Persons, and  
18 experts in various fields including Michael Pollan and former Vice President Al Gore.

19 WHEREAS, in response to First Lady Michelle Obama’s call to combat childhood  
20 obesity and to set an example for the rest of the country, people, schools, businesses and other  
21 organizations within the District have adopted this healthy tradition which has existed since  
22 World War I.

1           BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, that  
2 Mondays are hereby designated as “Meat Free Mondays”. This resolution may be cited as the  
3 “Meat Free Mondays Recognition Resolution of 2010”.

4           Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon the first date of publication in  
5 the District of Columbia Register.