



Legislation Text

File #: 39171, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

There is no fiscal impact.

Title

That the Common Council stands in solidarity with and support of the families of those slain at Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, the church family and the community it serves.

Body

WHEREAS, Richard Allen, a former Delaware slave, purchased his freedom in 1760 and organized a "Free African Society" during the American Revolutionary era to help meet the needs of Philadelphia's slave and free-black population; and

WHEREAS, in 1787, Richard Allen became the founder and first bishop of the historic African Methodist Episcopal Church as an autonomous denomination after a dramatic incident when Allen and a small band of black worshippers walked out of the white St. George Episcopal Church in Philadelphia in protest when they were pulled from the whites-only altar as they knelt in prayer; and

WHEREAS, Bishop Allen used his faith in the service of black people, whom he called "a people long forgotten"; and

WHEREAS, the African Methodist Episcopal Church has long served as a beacon of freedom and today has an international reach and membership of nearly 8 million people in 20 Episcopal Districts in 39 countries and on five continents; and

WHEREAS, the word African in the name of the church means it was organized by people of African descent and heritage, not that it was founded in Africa or that it was for persons of African descent only; and

WHEREAS, Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, also known as "Mother Emanuel," is the oldest black church in the South and one of the historic churches in our nation, and stands as a powerful example of the rich AME Church tradition and history of working for social justice, racial equality and civil rights; and

WHEREAS, on Wednesday, June 18, 2015, a 21-year old white man named Dylann Storm Roof sat for approximately one hour with members of Mother Emanuel who were assembled for Bible study, reading the Bible with them, praying with them, and in fellowship with them and then pulled out a gun and fired, reloading five times, and killing nine people; and

WHEREAS, among those killed - lives lost forever - were a state senator, the Senior Pastor, ministers, coaches, teachers, a librarian, counselors, choir members and an elderly sexton whose job was to make sure the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church was kept clean; and

WHEREAS, one of the few survivors of the shooting reported that the young man shouted racial slurs before beginning to fire his gun; and

WHEREAS, the FBI defined this horrifying act as domestic terrorism, a violent act "intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population"; and

WHEREAS, while sickening, this shooting was not an isolated incident, but rather a plague that has been with us from our country's earliest days and that has destroyed more black lives than we could ever begin to count; and

WHEREAS, it does not have to be this way!

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Common Council stands in solidarity with the black community and our faith partners in recognition that we are all impacted by this tragic and senseless loss of lives.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Common Council stands in solidarity to collectively send the message to other would-be terrorists and those who may share their toxic views that such racial hate will not be tolerated.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Common Council stands in solidarity to follow the compassionate and forgiving example of love displayed by the families of those who lost their lives that "hate does not win."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Common Council stands in solidarity with and support of the families of those slain, the Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church family and the Charleston community it serves.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Mayor, Common Council, staff and others will stand for a moment of silence during the reading of the names of those who lost their lives:

Rev. Clementa Pinckney
Rev. Daniel Simmons, Sr.
Cynthia Hurd
Rev. Sharonda Singleton
Myra Thompson
Tywanza Sanders
DePayne Middleton-Doctor
Susie Jackson
Ethel Lance