

# *Proclamation*

## **Declaring December 10<sup>th</sup> as Human Rights Day in the City of Mount Rainier**

**WHEREAS**, on December 10, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, establishing universal rights and freedom for all people, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, language, political opinion, national origin, or other status; and

**WHEREAS**, the Declaration establishes multiple rights such as freedom, equal dignity, freedom of movement, peace, and the overall worth of every human being; and

**WHEREAS**, December is Human Rights Month and brings awareness to continue protecting our residents from discrimination, a cornerstone of our city's legal framework; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on June 1, 1992, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment on October 21, 1994, and is bound by the terms of those treaties; and

**WHEREAS**, Federal, State and municipal governments should abide by treaties ratified by the United States as they are considered the "supreme Law of the Land" under clause 2 of Article VI of the United States Constitution; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States signed, on April 24, 1970, but never ratified, the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which obligates its participants to refrain from acts that would defeat the object and purpose of, international treaties; and

**WHEREAS**, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which was signed by the United States on October 5, 1977, but also never ratified, commits its parties to work toward the granting of economic, social, and cultural rights to all individuals, including labor rights, the right to health, the right to education, and the right to an adequate standard of living; and

**WHEREAS**, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which was signed by the United States on July 17, 1980 but never ratified obligates its participants to eliminate racial discrimination and promote understanding among all races, and requires its parties to criminalize hate speech and criminalize membership in racist organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was signed by the United States on February 16, 1995 but also never ratified, sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children and the U.S., as a signer, is obliged to not act contrary to its purpose, even though the Convention has not yet been ratified; and

**WHEREAS**, human rights are universal and indivisible, they transcend national and local boundaries and governments at every level share responsibility for ensuring that these rights are upheld in law, policy, and practice; and

**WHEREAS**, all levels of government are obligated to prevent rather than empower discrimination and violence at the hands of the state; and

**WHEREAS**, state and municipal local governments play an important role in ensuring that the United States complies with its treaty obligations; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Mount Rainier has implemented policies and issued resolutions that uphold, protect and defend the human rights of City residents, including declaring Reproductive Rights are Human Rights, as well as inclusionary law to protect our community as well as granting the right to vote for non-citizens on municipal elections; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Maryland protects fundamental human rights, including the rights to healthcare, nondiscrimination, life, privacy, freedom of movement, freedom from cruel and inhuman treatment, and many others; and

**WHEREAS**, the mass and illegal detention, kidnapping, dehumanization and deportation suspends the human rights of migrants who are fundamental members of our community and this nation; the systemic injustices of the criminal legal system, including the practice of forced prison labor and extreme sentences such as death by incarceration; water injustices as a manifestation of environmental racism; the expansion of the “terrorism” framework and vast surveillance infrastructure used to repress expression; U.S. complicity in advancing violations of domestic and international law; the regression on reproductive rights and bodily autonomy; and the criminalization of homelessness and poverty are all examples of grave human rights violations; and

**WHEREAS**, building legal frameworks rooted in human rights principles at the local and state levels is essential to ensuring access to health care, preventing discrimination, and safeguarding the lives and dignity of all people, especially amid ongoing federal attacks; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 27, 2025, in an attempt to evade accountability for grave, ongoing human rights violations in the country, the U.S. State Department sent a letter to the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights stating that the Administration will not participate in its upcoming Universal Periodic Review, a UN process through which countries review each other’s human rights records; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 7<sup>th</sup>, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted a decision after the United States’ nonparticipation, in which it called on the United States to resume its cooperation with the Universal Periodic Review and postponed it to November 2026, while leaving open the possibility for it to be scheduled sooner; and

**WHEREAS**, every UN member country participates in the Universal Period Review process and to date, only two other countries, have ever attempted to evade review and no country has ever fully done so; and

**WHEREAS**, rather than avoiding accountability for the erosion and attacks on human rights, all levels of government should be working to respect, protect and ensure human rights; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States voted for the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a foundational document adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948, in the wake of the atrocities of World War II; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 24, 2022, the United States Supreme Court in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* overturned nearly fifty years of precedent established under *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, eliminating the federal constitutional right to abortion in the United States and resulting in widespread restrictions and bans that have forced thousands of people to travel across state lines to obtain essential health care; and

**WHEREAS**, in the first two years since the Dobbs decision, state prosecutors across the nation have initiated at least 412 cases charging pregnant people with crimes related to pregnancy, pregnancy loss, or birth, and more than three-quarters of the people charged were low-income individuals, and in 264 of these cases, information supporting criminal prosecution was obtained or disclosed in a medical setting; and

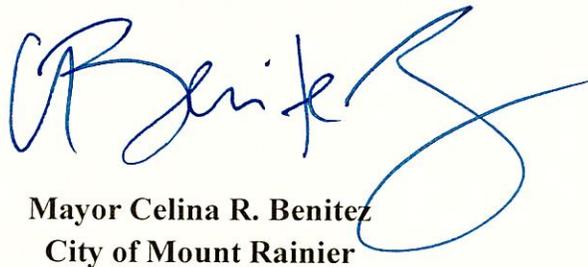
**WHEREAS**, marginalized communities including Indigenous, Black, and Brown people, immigrants, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people living with disabilities both seen and unseen, and those living in poverty or rural areas bear a disproportionate burden of abortion restrictions and criminalization, reflecting systemic inequities within both health and legal systems; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 24, 2025, the City of Mount Rainier became the first in the county to pass a resolution declaring that reproductive rights, including access to abortion, are human rights; and

**WHEREAS**, December 10<sup>th</sup> of each year is celebrated around the world as “Human Rights Day”; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City of Mount Rainier aligns itself with the human rights obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in accordance with Article VI, Clause 2 of the United States Constitution, and stands in solidarity with local, national, and international efforts to protect and expand human rights for all; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that that I, Celina R. Benitez, do hereby recognize December 10, 2025, as Human Rights Day in the City of Mount Rainier and commit to uphold freedom, democracy, and human rights in our own city, in our country, and around the world.



**Mayor Celina R. Benitez**  
**City of Mount Rainier**

