

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, APPEALING TO HIS EXCELLENCY ARCHBISHOP THOMAS WENSKI TO URGE CAMILLUS HOUSE TO RECONSIDER THE REDUCTION IN EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS - A DRASTIC PIVOT FROM ITS LONGSTANDING SERVICES THAT WOULD ADVERSELY IMPACT THE MOST VULNERABLE IN THE SOUTH FLORIDA COMMUNITY - AND TO FURTHER URGE CAMILLUS HOUSE TO UPHOLD ITS LEGACY OF COMPASSIONATE CARE WHILE PROTECTING THE DIGNITY AND WELL-BEING OF THE HOMELESS.

WHEREAS, the Camillus House, rooted in the compassionate hospitality of St. John of God, has dedicated itself for more than six decades to improving the quality of life of the vulnerable and homeless in South Florida through a continuum of housing and supportive services; and

WHEREAS, the founding mission of Camillus House began with a simple yet profound act of kindness in 1960, when Brother Mathias Barrett offered a bowl of corn flakes and milk to a hungry Cuban exile, laying the foundation for an enduring ministry that has since brought hope, healing, and dignity to hundreds of thousands in need; and

WHEREAS, Camillus House is one of the largest and oldest service providers for the homeless in South Florida, embodying the Catholic values of charity, compassion, and care for the most vulnerable members of the community; and

WHEREAS, the newly enacted Florida law, effective October 1, 2024, barring local governments from allowing people to sleep on public property, places additional burdens on the unhoused population, further underscoring the need for accessible emergency shelter services; and

WHEREAS, citing rising costs, Camillus House has recently announced its intention to double rates for emergency shelter beds, a move that would exacerbate the hardships faced by the homeless and result in widespread displacement and suffering of unprecedented proportions; and

WHEREAS, such a drastic increase runs counter to the foundational mission and values of Camillus House, as it prioritizes financial concerns over the well-being of those it is called to serve; and

WHEREAS, the *Miami Herald* reported on November 29, 2024, that three-quarters of emergency shelter beds at Camillus House are no longer available due to ongoing contractual disputes with local governments, driven by increased operational costs and shelter internal reorganization; and

WHEREAS, Camillus House reduced the number of available emergency shelter beds in September from approximately 320 to just 136, with only 90 of those beds currently occupied; and

WHEREAS, as a result, hundreds of Camillus House clients have been adversely impacted by the shelter's downsizing, including 50 vulnerable individuals who were abruptly relocated to a hostel in Miami Beach, a facility lacking onsite medical and health professionals or staff that is experienced in addressing the complex and specialized needs of individuals experiencing homelessness; and

WHEREAS, Camillus House is not a business, and its purpose must remain firmly grounded in the compassionate care and service of the vulnerable, reflecting the teachings of Christ and the Church's commitment to justice and compassion; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Commission of Miami Beach implore His Excellency, the Archbishop Thomas Wenski of the Archdiocese of Miami, to reaffirm the Church's commitment to protecting the most vulnerable among us and to guide Camillus House in aligning its policies with its sacred mission, ensuring that it remains a beacon of hope, hospitality, and compassion for those in greatest need; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Commission of Miami Beach wish to respectfully appeal to His Excellency to urge Camillus House to reconsider the proposed increase in emergency shelter rates, which would result in a doubling of current rates; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and City Commission further call upon the Archdiocese of Miami to support efforts to mobilize the South Florida community to engage in charitable giving and fundraising initiatives to close financial gaps faced by Camillus House, ensuring the continuation of its critical mission without compromising the dignity and well-being of the homeless.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT DULY RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH, FLORIDA, hereby appeal to His Excellency Archbishop Thomas Wenski to urge Camillus House to reconsider the reduction in emergency shelter beds - a drastic pivot from its longstanding services that would adversely impact the most vulnerable in the South Florida community - and to further urge Camillus House to uphold its legacy of compassionate care while protecting the dignity and well-being of the homeless.

PASSED and ADOPTED this ____ day of _____ 2024.

ATTEST:

Steven Meiner, Mayor

Rafael E. Granado, City Clerk

(Sponsored by Commissioner Alex J. Fernandez)

APPROVED AS TO
FORM & LANGUAGE
& FOR EXECUTION



City Attorney

12/4/2024

Date