At a Regular Meeting of the Royal Oak City Commission held on Monday, December 7, 2015, in City Hall, 211 Williams Street, the following Resolution was adopted:

WHEREAS, government should empower its citizenry to take part in the democratic process, not suppress or disenfranchise its citizens; and

WHEREAS, subversive legislation such as SB 13 which is designed specifically to suppress and disenfranchise voters in targeted communities is a betrayal of our core democratic principles; and

WHEREAS, similar legislation was enacted in 1964 and 2001, and both times Michigan voters have overturned such legislation by voter referendum; and

WHEREAS, the attempt to make this pending legislation “referendum proof” in a further attempt to silence the voice of the people; and

WHEREAS, the Michigan Association of County Clerks (MACC) and the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks (MAMC) are organizations which represent those committed individuals who administer our elections; and

WHEREAS, both MACC and MAMC and the Michigan Townships Association are all opposed to this legislation; and

WHEREAS, the MAMC states that passing this bill into law will “cripple” precincts and “lead to voter anger;” and

WHEREAS, a study published by The Pew Charitable Trust states that the State of Michigan already has the sixth longest voting lines in the country, where voters have to wait an average of 22 minutes to vote in the last presidential election and in some cases up to 4-hours, and has some of the longest ballots in the country; and

WHEREAS, municipal clerks fear that this bill would lead to more spoiled ballots, increasing wait times even further; and

WHEREAS, contrary to the stated goal of this bill is to increase voter participation in down ballot races, the MAMC contends that this bill will have the complete opposite effect and only serve to decrease participation; and

WHEREAS, voters who choose the straight-party option currently have the ability to vote for members of any other party, should they so choose; and

WHEREAS, although this bill affects partisan elections, this is not a partisan issue as it would have a major impact on both major political parties. Of the 220,412 straight ticket ballots cast statewide in the 2014 election, there were 108,211 Republican ballots cast and 109,711 Democratic ballots cast; and

WHEREAS, the cost of hiring additional poll workers would be squarely on the local communities, despite the state legislature not having restored its shared revenue obligations to said local communities, in effect making this an unfunded mandate from the State; and

WHEREAS, pending companion legislation, Senate Bill 639, would even further restrict the right and the ability of a citizen to exercise their vote.
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Royal Oak City Commission believes that voting and public participation is necessary and vital to a successful democracy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon its passing this resolution shall be expeditiously transmitted to: SEMCOG and its Member Communities; the Michigan Municipal League; the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks; the Michigan Association of County Clerks; the Oakland County Clerks’ Association; Governor Rick Snyder; Representative James Townsend; Senator Marty Knollenberg; Speaker of the House Kevin Cotter; House Minority Leader Tim Griemel; Senate Majority Leader Arlan Meekhof; Senate Minority Leader Jim Ananich; the Chair and Vice Chairs of the Senate Committee on Elections and Government Reform; and the Chair and Vice Chairs of the House Committee on Elections; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Royal Oak City Commission strongly encourages the state legislature to tackle more pressing election issues such as removing “dark money” from our elections, and increasing access to the voting booth by implementing such measures as “No Reason” absentee voting; and

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Royal Oak City Commission at a meeting held on December 7, 2015.

Melanie Halas, City Clerk