

## **Commendation of Program for Torture Victims and Recognition of United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture**

**WHEREAS** torture is one of the most profound human rights abuses, affecting millions of individuals and their families around the world including many who now live in the Los Angeles region; and

**WHEREAS** torture continues to be practiced around the world by many countries, contrary to the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and

**WHEREAS** on June 26, 1987 the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment entered into force to reaffirm the international commitment to prevent torture, and the principle that the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace; and

**WHEREAS** in 1998 the United States Congress passed the Torture Treatment Relief Act authorizing funds to support torture treatment programs, affirming that the United States recognizes the humanitarian, medical, and psychological consequences of torture; and

**WHEREAS** Los Angeles is the leading port of entry for refugees and asylum-seekers in the United States of America, and it is estimated that up to 35% of all refugees have been tortured; and

**WHEREAS** the Los Angeles-based Program for Torture Victims, founded by pioneers in the torture treatment movement 30 years ago, was the first human rights organization of its kind in the United States of America;

**WHEREAS** the Program for Torture Victims has helped rebuild the lives of thousands of immigrants in the Los Angeles region who have been victims of state sponsored torture from over 65 countries by providing comprehensive medical, psychological, legal, and case management services to alleviate the suffering and health consequences of state-sponsored torture; and

**WHEREAS** after receiving services from the Program for Torture Victims, thousands of survivors of torture and their families have improved their physical and mental health, re-entered society and the workforce, and participated actively in their communities throughout the Los Angeles area; and

**WHEREAS** on June 26, 2010 the international community and organizations throughout the country, including the Los Angeles based Program for Torture Victims, will commemorate “United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture”; and

**WHEREAS** commencing June 26, 2010, businesses in the Los Angeles area will mark “United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture” by donating proceeds to the Program for Torture Victims;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that by the adoption of this resolution the Los Angeles City Council along with the Mayor, City Attorney, and City Controller commend the Program for Torture Victims for its work in rebuilding lives and restoring the dignity, health, and hope of torture victims; join the Program for Torture Victims and its allies in condemning torture and working toward a future without torture; and recognize June 26, 2010 as “United Nations International Day In Support of Victims of Torture.”