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## United Dems Takes Stand Against Tanzania's Human Rights Abuses-- 2/14/14

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Against

Tanzania's Human Rights Abuses

Resolution Condemns Vallejo City Council Spending Tax Money on Mayor's Visit

2/14/14

UDSSC Press Release

Vallejo, CA (February 14, 2014) —The United Democrats of Southern Solano County overwhelmingly passed a resolution condemning the Vallejo City Council for its 4-2 vote on Feb. 11 to spend public tax money to send Mayor Osby Davis to travel to Tanzania in March as part of a delegation that includes Sister City officials and a fundamentalist Christian delegation. The mayor himself voted in favor of the expenditure on Feb. 11. The resolution calls on Mayor Davis to recuse himself from such votes in the future, and for Vallejo to end its 20-year Sister City relationship with Bagamoyo, Tanzania, and to reject future requests to pay for travel to the country which has a long history of human rights violations against its citizens.

Tanzania has a record of human rights abuses against LGBT citizens, women, children, religious groups including Christians, the disabled, various ethnicities and others. The most horrific human rights abuses include the dismemberment of albino persons for use in ritual witchcraft. Pregnant school girls have been threatened with court trials. Female genital mutilation is common. Lax labor laws allow children to be used in dangerous industries such as gold mines and even as sex slaves. Tanzania is a hub of human trafficking for forced labor and prostitution for men, women and children. Citizens have been illegally detained by police and military; some have disappeared or been murdered.

Tanzania has been identified as one of the worst nations in Africa when it comes to LGBT rights. Tanzania's record of human rights abuse has been condemned by the US State Department and the U.K., which threatened to pull international aid to the country. The infractions have been shown by several reports of the United Nations Human Rights Council as being most frequently directed against LGBT persons who may be incarcerated, beaten, or murdered. Tanzanian law punishes consensual sexual conduct between adult males with 30 years to life in prison. There are no hospitals where LGBT people can access treatment. The government has no programs to prevent HIV infection among the LGBT community. The U.S. Department of State's 2011 Human Rights Report found that "Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons faced societal discrimination that restricted their access to health care, housing, and employment". LGBT person's freedoms of association have been infringed as they are prevented from forming any groups. The government has refused to enact any laws which may go against societal norms, which include stoning gay persons in public.

In September of last year, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete travelled to Vallejo and met with Mayor Osby Davis and a contingent of about 100 invited citizens. It was his second visit to Vallejo. In 1998, he came at the invitation of the Vallejo Sister City Association, while serving as Tanzania's minister of foreign affairs. Vallejo has been a Sister City to Bagamoyo, in Tanzania, for over two decades. Kikwete is from Bagamoyo. Mayor Osby Davis, Mayor, Vice Mayor Robert Sampayan, and members Pippin Dew-Costa, and Rozzana Verder-Aliga voted to fund the trip. Councilmembers Katy Meissner and Robert McConnell voted against it. Councilmember Jess Malgapo was absent.

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