



Memorandum

Date: August 14, 2024

To: Mayor Christi Fraga
Councilwoman Digna Cabral
Councilman Rafael Pineyro
Councilwoman Maureen Porras

From: Vice Mayor Oscar Puig-Corvé

Subject: **Charitable Donations Gloria M. Silverio Foundation dba A Safe Haven for Newborns and Venezuela Awareness Foundation Inc.**

Introduction

It is my honor to support the efforts of the Gloria M. Silverio Foundation, Incorporated dba as A Safe Haven for Newborns (Safe Haven) and Venezuela Awareness Foundation Inc. Pursuant to Section 2-79 of the City Code of Ordinances on Municipal Sponsorships, I am respectfully requesting support for a donation to these two nonprofit organizations: \$1,000 to Gloria M. Silverio Foundation dba A Safe Haven for Newborns, and \$2,000 for Venezuela Awareness Foundation Inc.

Gloria M. Silverio Foundation dba A Safe Haven for Newborns

For 23 years, Nick Silverio, the founder, heart, and engine behind this amazing organization, the Board of Directors, and the Safe Haven team and volunteers, have given Safe Haven babies a chance for a future.

“Safe Havens for Newborns” began in response to the tragedy of newborn abandonment in Florida. The Florida Safe Haven law was first passed by the Florida legislature in 2001 modeled after the first law of its kind passed in 1999 in Texas. The law allows for babies to be surrendered by a parent in a safe place such as a hospital, a fire or police station, no questions asked and without the fear and worry of being prosecuted.

The Florida Safe Haven Law was enacted in response to an increasing number of newborn infants left to die in dumpsters, garbage cans, ditches, along lakes, canals and other hazardous places. Desperate young mothers and fathers didn’t believe they had any options, and too often

chose the frantic path of abandoning their newborns to then face charges in the legal system. It is an unthinkable desperation, but it is real.

After Nick's wife of 31 years, Gloria, passed away, Nick founded the Gloria M. Silverio Foundation, a 501(C)3 not for profit organization in 2001 and named it "A Safe Haven for Newborns." He did this in honor of her love of children which she was never able to have.

During this past legislative session, the timeframe allowed for leaving the newborns was extended to 30 days. Once the babies are surrendered in these designated emergency places, the baby is taken to a hospital where trained staff contact a private adoption agency who works on the placement of the newborn.

Today Safe Haven works to reach pregnant girls and mothers before they reach the crisis stage. Through the 24/7 multilingual, statewide referral helpline, these pregnant girls and women in crisis receive the confidential one-on-one assistance they need. This allows them to be assisted as they make their decision in the best interest of themselves and their baby. Some of the services they may receive include counseling, parenting classes, healthcare, information about adoption, and the confidentiality they are given should they choose to place their baby in a Safe Haven.

To date, Safe Haven's well-rounded and compassionate support has resulted in 23 newborns being saved.

Venezuela Awareness Foundation Inc.

VAF was Initially created to provide basic needs and immediate relief for Venezuelans fleeing their country's instability, lack of opportunity, and scarcity of basic human needs. Since 2004, VAF has evolved. Today, the VAF team provides immigrants from virtually every country in our region and beyond, basic human needs like food, clothing, living essentials, and more.

In 2016, VAF also began offering workshops and resources on the subjects they found most immigrants were concerned about and had unanswered questions to - citizenship, political asylum, political prisoners, and human rights.

Over the course of 20 years, VAF has provided services to over 30,000 people.

Fiscal Impact:

In accordance with Section 2-79 Municipal Sponsorships, each council member is allotted a total of \$5,000 per fiscal year to sponsor special events and programs that support the city's mission and provide a community benefit. The proposed sponsorship will total the amount of \$3,000.

Charitable Donations Gloria M. Silverio Foundation dba A Safe Haven for Newborns and
Venezuela Awareness Foundation Inc.

Page 3 of 3

Recommendation

I ask my colleagues to support this donation to empower and support the ongoing and lifesaving work of the Gloria M. Silverio Foundation, Incorporated dba A Safe Haven for Newborns, and Venezuela Awareness Foundation Inc. Thank you in advance.