

*Burrillville Town Council*  
*A Resolution Defending the Rights of Burrillville Citizens*  
*Guaranteed Under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution*  
*and Declaring Burrillville a “First Amendment Sanctuary Town”*

- Whereas, the threat of the spread of the Wuhan-origin Coronavirus (Covid-19) led the State of Rhode Island to issue a series of Executive Orders restricting the activities of Rhode Islanders and visitors to Rhode Island since March of 2020; and
- Whereas, Executive Orders 20-14 and 20-23, which imposed stay-at-home orders on Rhode Islanders and visitors to Rhode Island, expired at Midnight on Friday, May 8, 2020, and
- Whereas, Phases One and Two of the plan to reopen the Rhode Island economy include many cumbersome restrictions on places of worship, restaurants, retail establishments and other small businesses; with inconsistencies of enforcement afforded to legal, law abiding citizens versus illegal activities such as looting and arson; and
- Whereas, the Town of Burrillville recognizes the threat of the Wuhan-origin Coronavirus (Covid-19) to the physical well-being of its residents and encourages all those who feel that they may have pre-existing conditions or be vulnerable to the effects of the virus to exercise social distancing and safety measures to protect themselves, and will not discourage them from such protections; and
- Whereas, the Town of Burrillville has already undertaken extraordinary measures to protect vulnerable populations, provide food delivery, medicine delivery and create a well working network of local support of its citizens; and
- Whereas, the Town of Burrillville also recognizes that the restrictions imposed by many of these Wuhan-origin Coronavirus (Covid-19) related Executive Orders have imposed substantial harm to the emotional, spiritual, and financial well-being of its residents; and
- Whereas, July 4 is the day on which we celebrate American Independence; and
- Whereas, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, protects the freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly and the right to petition the government for the redress of grievances and reads:
- “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”; and*
- Whereas, Article 1, Section 3 of the Rhode Island Constitution protects the freedom of religion and reads:
- “Whereas Almighty God hath created the mind free; and all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burdens, or by civil incapacitations, tend to beget habits of hypocrisy and meanness; and whereas a principal object of our venerable ancestors, in their migration to this country and their settlement of this state, was, as they expressed it, to hold forth a lively experiment that a flourishing civil state may stand and be best maintained with full liberty in religious concernments; we, therefore, declare that no person shall be compelled to frequent or to support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatever, except in fulfillment of such person’s voluntary contract; nor enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened in body or goods; nor disqualified from holding any office; nor otherwise suffer on account of such person’s religious belief; and that every person shall be free to worship God according to the dictates of such person’s conscience, and to profess and by argument to maintain such person’s opinion in*

*matters of religion; and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect the civil capacity of any person.”; and*

Whereas, Article 1, Section 21 of the Rhode Island Constitution protects the right to assemble, redress grievances and the right of free speech and reads:

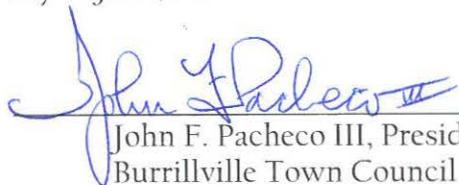
*“The citizens have a right in a peaceable manner to assemble for their common good, and to apply to those invested with the powers of government, for redress of grievances, or for other purposes, by petition, address, or remonstrance. No law abridging the freedom of speech shall be enacted.”*

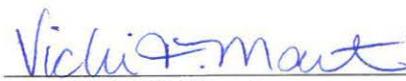
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Burrillville Town Council that the Town of Burrillville be, and hereby is, declared to be a “First Amendment Sanctuary Town.”

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Burrillville Town Council affirms its support for the Burrillville Town Administration, including the Burrillville Police Department, in the exercise of its sound discretion to not enforce unconstitutional executive orders, related to the Wuhan-origin Coronavirus (Covid-19), now and in the future, against its citizens.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Burrillville Town Council will not appropriate funds for staffing, overtime, and/or expenses for work related to the execution of the unconstitutional executive orders related to the Wuhan-origin Coronavirus (Covid-19) that infringe upon the aforesaid Constitutional rights of the People of the Town of Burrillville to freedom of religion, assembly and redress of grievances.

Adopted as a resolution this 24<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2020.

  
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John F. Pacheco III, President  
Burrillville Town Council

Attest:   
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Vicki T. Martin  
Burrillville Town Clerk

