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Councilmember Jack Evans Chairman Phil Mendelson

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Councilmember Vincent C. Gray

A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

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IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to amend the Helicopter Landing Pad Public Nuisance Act of 1987 to allow a hospital that is certified as a Level One Trauma Center to construct a helicopter landing pad.

 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Helicopter Landing Pad Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2018”.

Sec. 2. (a) There exists an immediate need to amend the Helicopter Landing Pad Public Nuisance Act of 1987 (“1987 Act”) to allow a hospital that is certified as a Level One Trauma Center to commence construction of a helicopter landing pad.

 (b) Under current law, it is considered a public nuisance to operate a helipad that was not in operation prior to July 14, 1987 in any area zoned residential. Consequently, George Washington University Hospital (“GW Hospital”), which is certified as a Level One Trauma Center and a Comprehensive Stroke Center, is prohibited from operating a helipad.

 (c) MedStar Washington Hospital Center is the only other hospital in the District that is certified as a Level One Trauma Center and a Comprehensive Stroke Center. Further, MedStar Washington Hospital Center has a helipad.

 (d) Currently, a medivac helicopter that transfers a patient to GW Hospital must land at the South Capitol Street Heliport (“Heliport”), which is located by Nationals Park. From there an ambulance is used to transport the patient to GW Hospital. The Heliport is over four and a half miles from GW Hospital. Depending on the time of day and the traffic, the time it takes an ambulance to transport a patient can be substantial.

 (e) In response for the need to ensure that District residents have greater access to life-saving care and to help the District be better prepared for mass casualty events, the Council has given initial approval to the Helicopter Landing Pad Amendment Act of 2018 (Bill 22-579). Bill 22-579 is scheduled to have its second and final reading before the Council on June 5, 2018.

 (f) Emergency legislation, similar to Bill 22-579, is necessary because, even though GW Hospital has been given initial approval by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to operate a helipad, the helipad must be fully constructed and ready for inspection by the FAA by June 13, 2019 to get final approval.

 (g) As time is of the essence, and Bill 22-579 most likely will not become law until the fall, emergency legislation will allow the construction of the helipad at GW Hospital to commence as soon as possible.

Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the Helicopter Landing Pad Emergency Amendment Act of 2018 be adopted after a single reading.

Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.