



Councilmember Christina Henderson

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A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to amend, on an emergency basis, the Youth Employment Act of 1979 to establish a Middle School Career Exploration Pilot program to provide soft skills training and volunteer opportunities to young teens.

RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the “Middle School Career Exploration Pilot Emergency Declaration Resolution of 2023”.

Sec. 2. (a) The District’s summer Out-of -School Time (OST), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and Department of Employment Services (DOES) programming opportunities are robust, but not all students can nor do participate. Middle schoolers may feel that they are too old for DPR and OST programming, but they are not yet old enough to participate in the DOES Summer Youth Employment Program. It is important that the District offer programming that provides a broad array of extracurricular opportunities across age groups so that students’ strengths and interests are engaged year-round.

(b) Middle school is a critical time for children’s exploration of and exposure to opportunities in their broader community, and it is when youth typically first begin developing

36 skills that they eventually use to earn money. It is important that youth in this age group have a
37 broad array of hands-on experiences and opportunities to develop new and existing skills during
38 the summer and beyond.

39 (c) DOES currently offers the Middle School Exploration program to middle schoolers in
40 grades 6-8, but the program as currently instituted has only 3 providers and a total of 225 spots,
41 and participants are neither compensated nor incentivized. Given that there are approximately
42 17,000 middle school students enrolled in District of Columbia Public Schools and in charter
43 schools, an expanded pilot program is necessary to assess the impact of the current program and
44 the demand for a potential year-round expansion. This legislation will help lay the foundation for
45 the opportunities necessary to create positive long-term employment outcomes and help middle
46 school youth in the District in the summer of 2023. The emergency legislation's effective date of
47 June 1, 2023 allows DOES to fully implement the pilot program immediately while the
48 permanent bill is considered by the Council.

49 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances
50 enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the Middle
51 School Career Exploration Pilot Emergency Amendment Act of 2023 be adopted after a single
52 reading.

53 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.