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LA CITY COUNCIL STANDS WITH UKRAINE, CONDEMNS PUTIN

Council Vote Encourages Government/Businesses to Divest from Russia

LOS ANGELES, March 8, 2022 - Led by Councilmember Paul Koretz, the Los Angeles City Council unanimously affirmed its solidarity with Ukraine by approving a Resolution “strongly condemning” Vladimir Putin’s invasion and supporting immediate divestment of all holdings and investments in Russia by all business and governmental entities. The Resolution also states that the City of Los Angeles shall continue to support and celebrate the City’s diverse Russian community, culture, and local Russian-owned businesses who have nothing to do with Putin’s war. In addition to Paul Koretz, the Resolution was co-authored and seconded by six more Councilmembers, including Council President Nury Martinez, and Councilmembers Mitch O’Farrell, Kevin de León, Monica Rodriguez, Nithya Raman and Joe Buscaino.

“What these sanctions are doing is sending a clear signal to the Russian people that they need to take matters into their own hands,” said **Councilmember Paul Koretz**. “Putin must be removed and charged for crimes of aggression, the most egregious crime against humanity.”

"The 13th District includes many Ukrainian cultural institutions, which I proudly represent," said **Councilmember Mitch O'Farrell**. "Today's unanimous action from the Los Angeles City Council affirmed that we stand in solidarity with Ukraine and Ukrainian people everywhere. As a city, we agree that we cannot contribute to Vladimir Putin's unjustified invasion of a sovereign nation."

"I am proud to stand with my colleagues today as Los Angeles continues to do everything in its power to uphold the sovereignty of Ukraine and its people," said **Councilmember Joe Buscaino**. "The bottom line is that supporting Ukraine means supporting freedom and today Los Angeles joins President Biden in taking any action available to us to halt the slaughter of our Ukrainian brothers and sisters."

“Russia’s unprovoked and unilateral assault against Ukraine represents an international threat beyond what we have witnessed since World War II,” said **Councilmember Kevin de León**. "No amount of Russian propaganda can remotely justify the graphic images of bombings on innocent civilians the world sees coming out of Ukraine. These actions fall squarely on the shoulders of Vladimir Putin and the Russian oligarchs that have propped him up.”

The Council acknowledged that it does not have legislative authority over its pension systems and cannot direct them to divest. But **Councilmember Paul Koretz** said, “I am sure we have people running our pension funds with enough talent and imagination to free us from ethically questionable investments. We cannot help fund this insane war against Ukraine.”

The crime of aggression means “the planning, preparation, initiation or execution, by a person in a position effectively to exercise control over or to direct the political or military action of a State, of an act of aggression which, by its character, gravity and scale, constitutes a manifest violation of the Charter of the United Nations.” The act of aggression includes “the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty of another State.”