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2 Councilmember Robert White

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman Phil Mendelson

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5 Councilmember Mary Cheh

\_\_\_\_\_ Councilmember Lewis-George

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8 Councilmember Christina Henderson

\_\_\_\_\_ Councilmember Charles Allen

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11 Councilmember Brianne Nadeau

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14 A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

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18 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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23 To declare on an emergency basis, that the District of Columbia Public School (DCPS)  
24 system or any individual or group of public charter schools operating under a  
25 single charter in the District to expand an existing distance learning program to  
26 students with certain high-risk medical conditions to learn from home on  
27 recommendation from a physician and to students who live with an individual  
28 with a high-risk medical condition if the student is ineligible for a COVID-19  
29 vaccine; to amend, on an emergency basis, an Act To provide for compulsory  
30 school attendance, for the taking of a school census in the District of Columbia,  
31 and for other purposes to define excused absences as including certain absences  
32 related to COVID-19 infections during school year 2021-22; and to require, on an  
33 emergency basis, certain reporting requirements related to COVID-19 cases at  
34 each local education agency and DCPS facility issues.

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36 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That  
37 this resolution may be cited as the “Protecting Our Children Emergency Declaration  
38 Resolution of 2021”.

39 Sec. 2. (a) There exists an immediate need for schools to expand existing  
40 distance learning programs to serve students with certain medical conditions and students  
41 that live with adults that are immunocompromised and at greater risk of becoming

42 seriously ill due to infection from the COVID-19 virus. The Council has received  
43 countless requests from parents for the expansion of virtual learning options for all  
44 students for the 2021-22 school year, regardless of a student's medical condition, and to  
45 allow for the recommendation, and not requirement, from a physician to serve as  
46 sufficient authorization for student to participate in virtual learning. The current policy  
47 limits parents' ability to choose the best educational option for their student and while in-  
48 person instruction is widely recognized as the best way to educate students, families need  
49 the increased flexibility to mitigate the risk of severe illness from COVID-19 in their  
50 household.

51 (b) Due to the need for many students to quarantine because they have either  
52 tested positive for the COVID-19 virus or it was determined that the student was a close  
53 contact of someone who tested positive for the virus, it is imperative that students who  
54 are forced to quarantine do not incur unexcused absences for their time in quarantine. The  
55 Council receive testimony from members of the public to suggest that unexcused  
56 absences are being incurred for close contacts, which in some cases, has triggered a  
57 referral to the Children and Family Services Agency that oversees and investigates  
58 violations of the truancy laws in the District. Families who are asked to quarantine  
59 because it has been determined that they are close contacts should not trigger referral and  
60 students should not have to incur unexcused absences for their time away from the  
61 classroom due to circumstances beyond their control.

62 (c) Reporting is necessary to ensure transparency around the COVID-19 spread  
63 across schools and to increase visibility into the ongoing work of the Department of

64 General Services in preparing and maintaining each school facility and student and staff  
65 safety.

66 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the  
67 circumstances enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it  
68 necessary that the Protecting our Children Emergency Act of 2021 be adopted after a  
69 single reading.

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

DRAFT