

Offered by Councilor Salvatore LaMattina and Councilor Steven Murphy



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND NINE

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE PRESERVATION OF THE USS
CONTITUTION'S HERITAGE AND TIME-HONORED TRADITIONS OF DAILY
GUN SALUTES AND PLAYING OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM IN BOSTON'S
CHARLESTOWN NAVY YARD**

- WHEREAS*, The USS Constitution is one of America's greatest national treasures; and,
- WHEREAS*, The USS Constitution's construction was authorized as a result of the Navy Act of 1794 and was named by President George Washington after the United States Constitution; and,
- WHEREAS*, This frigate was built in Boston at Edmund Hartt's shipyard, and her first duties with the newly formed United States Navy were to provide protection for American merchant shipping during the Quasi War with France and to defeat the Barbary pirates in the First Barbary War; and,
- WHEREAS*, The ship is most famous for her actions during the War of 1812 against Great Britain, when she captured numerous merchant ships and defeated five British warships which earned her the nickname "Old Ironsides," because cannon balls repelled off her thick hull; and,
- WHEREAS*, The USS Constitution is the oldest commissioned naval vessel afloat in the world. The officers and crew are all active-duty US Navy personnel and the assignment is considered special duty in the Navy; and,
- WHEREAS*, The USS Constitution's mission today is to promote understanding of the Navy's role in war and peace through educational outreach, historic demonstration, and active participation in public events. Her crew of 60 officers and sailors participate in ceremonies, educational programs and special events while keeping the ship open to visitors year-round and providing free tours; and,
- WHEREAS*, The Charlestown Navy Yard was built on what was once Mouton's or Morton's Point, the landing place of the British army prior to the Battle of Bunker Hill. It was one of the first shipyards built in the United States. Today, thirty acres of the Navy Yard are preserved by the National Park Service as part of Boston National Historical Park; and,
- WHEREAS*, The USS Constitution's daily gun salutes dates back to 1798. The ritual requires the ship's officers to fire one of its working guns every day at dawn and again at sunset, along with playing the national anthem; and,
- WHEREAS*, Recently, a few Charlestown residents have attempted to silence the USS Constitution's cannons and end the patriotic rituals of the ship dating back to the 18th Century. These complaints threaten not only generations of US Naval traditions, but also erode the historical preservation of one of Boston's greatest treasures; *THEREFORE BE IT*
- RESOLVED*, That the Boston City Council supports and relentlessly defends the preservation of the USS Constitution's heritage and time-honored traditions of daily gun salutes and playing the national anthem in Boston's Charlestown Navy Yard.

Filed on: Monday, November 16, 2009