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MAYORS BHALLA AND FULOP SIGN MATCHING EXECUTIVE ORDERS TO SUPPORT VETERAN, LGBT, AND DISABILITY-OWNED BUSINESSES

Hoboken Mayor Ravi S. Bhalla and Jersey City Mayor Steven M. Fulop signed matching executive orders together on Wednesday at Hoboken City Hall. Both Cities had previously adopted policies to help support women and minority owned businesses, which the executive orders expand upon to include businesses owned by veterans, members of the LGBT community, and people with disabilities.

“We are excited to come together as neighboring communities to help empower members of underrepresented groups in the local economy,” said Hoboken Mayor Ravi S. Bhalla. “Hoboken and Jersey City are tied together, with many local businesses having presence in each, and residents of each city often spend a lot of time and resources in the other. Together, we are committed to sending the message that our region is an open and welcoming place to all with equal economic opportunities for everyone, regardless of identity.”

“This is a historic moment for our business inclusion movement and our community. We’re happy to join our neighboring City of Hoboken in another step forward in equality by signing this executive order,” said Mayor Steven M. Fulop. “This recognition of LGBT, veteran and disabled person communities, who might otherwise be underrepresented as small business owners, promotes intentional inclusion in our City where we aim to represent every one of our residents. These businesses will now have additional access provided to them through partnerships that will provide independent mentorship and leadership training, scholarship programs, development and networking opportunities, and other business development tools. We hope all qualifying businesses take advantage of this unique opportunity to become some of the first in the state to register.”

Businesses can receive certification from one of various third parties, indicating that at least 51% of the business is owned by a woman, a racial or ethnic minority, a veteran, a member of the LGBT community, or a person with a disability.

The National LGBT Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC) is designated in the executive orders as the third party certifying LGBT-owned businesses.

“Thanks to the leadership of Mayor Bhalla of Hoboken and Mayor Fulop of Jersey City, more diverse New Jersey entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to create jobs and develop innovations than ever before. This historic precedent will help push the New Jersey State Senate to pass A3162/S1570, which has already passed the Assembly, to include LGBT, disability, and veteran-owned firms into statewide contracts. These executive orders also offer other major cities, including nearby New York City, a replicable framework to expand their procurement and economic development programs, which is a win for every community and every economy. It makes sense that this kind of inclusion is taking off here, as the northeast is one of the largest concentrations of NGLCC Certified LGBT Business Enterprises and LGBT-owned companies, who collectively add to the \$1.7 trillion dollars the LGBT business community puts into the national economy. Progressive, inclusive leadership, like Mayors Bhalla and Fulop have displayed, will ensure greater access to the American Dream for every

American,” said NGLCC Co-Founders, President Justin Nelson & CEO Chance Mitchell.

Disability:IN is designated as the third party certifying businesses owned by people with disabilities.

“Disability:IN applauds Mayor Bhalla and Mayor Fulop for recognizing the power of including LGBT, disability, and veteran-owned firms in city contracts,” said Jill Houghton, President & CEO of Disability:IN. “People with disabilities are natural innovators and entrepreneurs, and giving them equal access to contracting opportunities will enhance their ability to be self-sufficient. Hoboken and Jersey City are diverse cities and with supplier contracts representing the talent and skill of its residents is smart and will lead to greater innovation. We are excited for this momentum to continue to the New Jersey State Senate in passing A3162/S1570.”

"Easterseals NJ has long had a presence in Jersey City, and we are now about to call Hoboken our new home," said Brian Fitzgerald, President and CEO of Easterseals NJ. "We applaud Mayors Bhalla and Fulop for their continued commitment to expanding opportunities for people with disabilities and recognizing the value and impact they have in the business community. We are proud to continue to partner with them to promote equal opportunity for all."

Multiple national organizations certify businesses owned by veterans, including the Department of Veteran Affairs, the National Veteran Business Development Council, the National Veteran Owned Business Association, and others.

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