



**Proclamation No. 21-0050
HONORING NICK MITCHELL FOR HIS SERVICE
AS DENVER'S INDEPENDENT MONITOR**

WHEREAS: Nicholas E. "Nick" Mitchell was born in New Jersey in 1975, moving with his mother and brother to Brooklyn, NY in 1986, and following his primary and secondary schooling in Brooklyn, Nick studied political science at Evergreen State College in Washington State, after which he returned home to take a job at the New York Civilian Complaint Review Board in 1999; and

WHEREAS: In his job at the Review Board, Nick investigated complaints against NYPD officers and presented his office's findings in court, but his desire to be on the other side of the witness stand led him to enroll at the Fordham University School of Law in 2004; and

WHEREAS: During the summer of his first year of law school, Nick got a grant to work in the domestic court system in Sierra Leone and on a genocide case at the U.N.'s Special Court for Sierra Leone. Finishing law school, he took a job at a large international law firm – Allen & Overy - in New York City, but never felt at ease defending CEOs from Department of Justice investigations; and

WHEREAS: In 2008, Nick joined attorneys around the U.S. who successfully sued then-President George W. Bush to ensure that *Habeas Corpus* extended to detainees at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp in Cuba, visiting Gitmo to interview detainees about whether they had legally moved through the judicial system; and

WHEREAS: Nick's love of the great outdoors led Mitchell on a weekend trip to Colorado in 2011, following which he decided to make the move from Brooklyn to Denver and shortly thereafter took a job litigating at a local law firm; and

WHEREAS: Not long thereafter, Nick applied for, and was ultimately appointed by Mayor Michael B. Hancock as Denver's second Independent Monitor in August 2012; and

WHEREAS: During his time as Monitor, Nick's office oversaw thousands of investigations into complaints of misconduct, clearing many Denver Police Department ("DPD") officers and Denver Sheriff Department ("DSD") deputies, while ensuring accountability for those who abused their authority and the public trust; and

WHEREAS: Nick issued multiple reports about problematic practices in the Denver Sheriff Department, including the mishandling of inmate grievances and the tragic death of Michael Marshall at the hands of deputy sheriff personnel, triggering major reforms in Denver's jails; and

WHEREAS: At the unanimous request of Denver's City Council, Nick conducted a sweeping investigation into the Denver Police Department response to protests in downtown Denver following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis MN, making 16 recommendations for reform, all of which were adopted by the DPD; and

WHEREAS: As Monitor, Nick served as co-chair of the DSD Use of Force Policy Committee, which transformed use of force standards for Denver deputies. Nick also issued public guidance about deficiencies in the DPD use of force policy, leading to the complete rewrite of the policy, and released an analysis of body-worn camera use by DPD officers, resulting in significant enhancements on their use; and

WHEREAS: He co-founded the *Bridging the Gap: Kids and Cops* program, which has won national recognition for helping to transform relationships between police officers and youth in Denver; and

WHEREAS: Nick led three successful efforts to change the law that empowers the OIM, including a City Charter amendment passed in 2016 with the support of 72 percent of Denver voters; and

WHEREAS: Mitchell received awards from the Denver Bar Association and the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement, has been recognized as an expert on civilian oversight and law enforcement reform by CNN, the *New Yorker*, and other national publications, and consulted with numerous cities seeking to enhance oversight of law enforcement, including Phoenix, Tulsa, Madison, Baltimore, Colorado Springs, Aurora, and others; and

WHEREAS: Nick was selected to become a Gates Fellow in the Harvard Kennedy School of Government's Senior Executives in State and Local Government Program in 2013, elected as a Director of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement in 2014, and appointed to the Board of Governors of the Colorado Bar Association in 2018; and

WHEREAS: On January 4, 2021, Nick Mitchell left his role as Denver's Independent Monitor to oversee a Department of Justice consent decree with the County of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. The consent decree is a court-ordered agreement designed to correct systemic, unconstitutional conditions in the Los Angeles County jails, the largest municipal jail system in the world.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

Section 1. The City Council of the City and County of Denver thanks Nick Mitchell for his dedicated service as Independent Monitor, exemplified by his efforts to increase safety for all residents of Denver while increasing the transparency of oversight of Denver's Safety agencies and transforming Denver's Office of the Independent Monitor into a model emulated across the country.

Section 2. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and that a copy be transmitted to Nick Mitchell.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL January 19, 2021

PRESIDENT