Resolution supporting the Board of Supervisors action in amending the Municipal Elections Code to reauthorize Non-United States citizen voting in elections for the Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District

WHEREAS, In November 2016, San Francisco voters approved Proposition N, a Charter amendment, adding Charter Section 13.111, to allow non-United States citizens ("noncitizens") who meet certain criteria, to vote for members of the San Francisco Board of Education ("School Board") in the City’s November 2018, November 2020, and November 2022 elections; and

WHEREAS, This right was extended to all noncitizen residents in San Francisco who were of legal voting age and the parents, legal guardians, and caregivers (collectively, “parents”) of a child under age 19 living within the boundaries of the San Francisco Unified School District ("School District"); and

WHEREAS, Over the last 30 years, cities and towns in Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts and New York have passed laws allowing immigrants to vote; and

WHEREAS, The public in School Board meetings share ideas for improving the School District’s family communications plan, provide crucial input on budget matters, and educate fellow parents about their right to be involved in their children’s education. Realizing the vital contributions that noncitizen parents make to the School District, San Francisco voters passed...
Proposition N to provide them with a greater voice in School District policies by permitting them to vote in School Board elections; and

WHEREAS, Extensive research demonstrates how parent involvement in their children’s education is critical for students' lifelong achievements and success. These studies demonstrate that students whose parents are involved in their schooling are more likely to attend school regularly, have better social emotional skills and succeed in their studies; and

WHEREAS, Proposition N is imperative for parent and student engagement in our schools, and ensures that noncitizen parents have a role in selecting the officials who set the School District policies that impact their children’s education; and

WHEREAS, Continuation of noncitizen voting in School Board elections is necessary to allow many unheard voices to come forward. Though the number of noncitizen parents in the School District is currently unknown, as of the 2020-2021 school year, there were over 13,682 English Language Learners in the School District. These students spoke a variety of languages including, but not limited to, Arabic, Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Samoan, Spanish, Filipino, and Vietnamese; and

WHEREAS, In order to realize the full civic engagement of noncitizen parents in School District affairs by voting, additional resources are necessary for outreach, engagement, and education, as well as improved coordination between community-based groups, School District, and City Departments in order to ensure that noncitizen parents have access to a safe voting system and knowledge of resources available including language access; and

Commissioners Souza, Paz, Obregon, Rahimi, Khojasteh, Kennelly
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WHEREAS, Noncitizens have more of a stake in their communities when they have a seat at the table, particularly when they are eligible to vote for School Board representatives who are elected to represent the educational needs of their children; and

WHEREAS, Reauthorization of noncitizen voting is an opportunity to enfranchise a broader San Francisco community and create pathways for more equitable allocation of public school resources as well as expanding efforts to increase cultural competency in our schools; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Immigrant Rights Commission supports the reauthorization of Non-United States Citizen voting pursuant to Charter Section 13.111(a)(2) non-United States citizen voting in School Board elections, according to the terms of Charter Section 13.111(a)(1)(B), beyond December 31, 2022, with no sunset date on the extension; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Immigrant Rights Commission shall transmit a copy of this Resolution to the Sponsor, Board of Supervisors, and Mayor.