

FILE NO. 200435

RESOLUTION NO.

1 [Urging Implementation of Statewide Election Reforms for the November Presidential Election
2 - Protect Voter Access, Ensure Mass Public Education on Voting, and Focus on Equity]

3 **Resolution urging Governor Gavin Newsom and Secretary of State Alex Padilla to**
4 **adopt and implement statewide election reforms for the November Presidential Election**
5 **that includes Vote-By-Mail ballots for every registered voter, in addition to providing**
6 **equitable alternatives to cast a ballot in person safely; and affirming the principles of**
7 **protecting voter access, ensuring mass public education on how to vote, and centering**
8 **equity when serving the most disenfranchised voters.**

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10 WHEREAS, While the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a challenge to our State, it
11 also brings an opportunity for California and San Francisco to show national leadership,
12 particularly on issues at the core of our democracy like voting; and

13 WHEREAS, Presidential Elections typically generate high voter interest and turnout, we
14 thus must be prepared for high voter participation in the November 2020 election; and

15 WHEREAS, The pandemic disproportionately impacts certain communities, including
16 communities of color, young people, people with disabilities, and the housing insecure; and
17 these same communities are low frequency voters and at risk of further disenfranchisement if
18 the State's efforts fall short; and

19 WHEREAS, On March 20, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom through an executive order
20 authorized special elections requiring vote-by-mail options to all eligible voters, but only
21 encouraged in-person voting to be made available with the discretion to each respective
22 County official; and

23 WHEREAS, As demonstrated in the Special Election, in which different counties
24 implemented their own policies, some counties had as few as only two ballot drop-off
25 locations with no polling places while other counties had up to a dozen physical locations; and

1 WHEREAS, Recommendations to allow discretion to County officials may result in
2 disparities and threaten to disenfranchise infrequent voters, many of whom use in-person
3 voting as their primary, and sometimes, only option to cast a ballot this November; and

4 WHEREAS, San Francisco has always been a champion for civic participation and will
5 continue to defend voting rights to ensure they are not further threatened in the wake of
6 COVID-19; now, therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges for statewide reforms, in advance of
8 the November 2020 election voting model, to uphold the following principles:

- 9 • Protecting voter access; by protecting the rights of infrequent voters including
10 young people, communities of color, low-income, and the homeless and their
11 options for voting including mail, in-person, drop off ballot voting and expanded
12 voting periods; and
- 13 • Ensuring mass public education particularly for infrequent voters so they are
14 fully educated and informed about any shifts in the voting model, including
15 education about changes to the November election model, identifying voter's
16 language preference prior to Vote-By-Mail ballot mailings, and how and where to
17 cast a ballot; and
- 18 • Centering equity in implementation, including education and outreach, in-person
19 voting location placement, in-language access, support for the elderly and voters
20 with disabilities, and preparation for a surge in low frequency voters; and

21 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Governor to adopt a
22 proposal that County Election Officials must mail every registered voter in California a Vote-
23 By-Mail ballot, and that voters are given additional options to cast a ballot in order to increase
24 physical distancing and avoid long lines at the polls; and, be it

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1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors also affirms that a reduction of
2 polling places would be hazardous to public health during COVID-19, as evidenced by the
3 Wisconsin primary election where just five of 180 polling sites remained open in Milwaukee,
4 and primarily voters of color waited in lines for hours; and, be it

5 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the San Francisco
6 Department of Elections to maintain polling site ratios, between the range of 1 site per 1000
7 voters to 1 site per 10,000 voters, that take into account the status of the health and shelter-
8 in-place orders in November and allow social distancing as recommended by the Public
9 Health Officer and avoid overcrowding, in addition to implementing universal Vote-By-Mail;
10 and, be it

11 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges County Election Officials
12 to prioritize the health and safety of both voters and poll workers by implementing robust
13 health and safety protocols, in consultation with state and local health officials and the San
14 Francisco Public Health Officer, and ensuring adequate staff capacity at in-person voting
15 locations; and, be it

16 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges County Election Officials
17 to increase pay for poll workers, including “hazard” wages, and think creatively about how to
18 staff in-person polling locations and vote centers; and, be it

19 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges County Election Officials
20 to train poll workers in sanitation, line management, and physical distancing tactics to ensure
21 the health and safety of both poll workers and voters alike; and, be it

22 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges County Election Officials
23 to implement line management tools, including, but not limited to a digital app that tracks
24 voting location wait times and gives voters real-time updates, opportunities to schedule
25 appointments to vote, ticket dispenser systems that allow voters to social distance while

1 waiting to vote, and specific hours dedicated for seniors and those with underlying health
2 conditions to vote; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors opposes recommendations that
4 the State give counties broad discretion or waive current in-person voting and drop-off voting
5 requirements since such discretion or waiver, without strong minimum standards, establishes
6 a system where voters will have drastically different voting experiences depending upon who
7 they are and where they live; and, be it

8 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby directs the Clerk of the
9 Board to transmit copies to the Office of the Governor Gavin Newsom, Office of Secretary of
10 State Alex Padilla, the Offices of the San Francisco representatives in the California
11 Legislature, Director John Arntz of the San Francisco Department of Elections, and the
12 California Association of Clerks and Election Officials.

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