Resolution urging the adoption of the Shelter Monitoring Committee’s recommendations for amending the Human Services Agency’s Imminent Danger policy as it pertains to victims of domestic violence.

WHEREAS, Under the existing Human Services Agency’s (HSA) Imminent Danger policy, families are not eligible for shelter placement or to remain in shelter for thirty days if they are in an imminently dangerous situation that might cause harm to themselves, shelter families, or shelter staff; and

WHEREAS, Recently, HSA reduced the denial of service period from thirty days to fifteen days, but this is insufficient in assisting victims of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, In most cases of imminent danger, all members of the family will be required to leave immediately; and

WHEREAS, An example of imminent danger includes domestic violence incidents that have occurred between people in intimate relationships – either at the shelter or up to thirty days prior to the family being placed in the shelter; and

WHEREAS, Nine families received Denials of Service (DOS) from February 2014 – June 2015; and

WHEREAS, Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing constitute a critical service for families fleeing from domestic violence. In Fiscal Year 2013-2014, city-funded emergency shelters provided 3,591 bed nights to women and their children escaping domestic violence, while three transitional housing programs and one permanent supportive housing program provided 11,659 bed nights to women seeking longer-term stability. Sadly, 1,893 individuals were turned away due to lack of space; and
WHEREAS, The work of city agencies, community organizations and advocates, such as the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women, the Domestic Violence Consortium, and the Family Violence Council have led to ground-breaking programs and policies supporting domestic violence victims and reducing domestic violence-related crime; and

WHEREAS, Prohibiting victims of domestic violence and their families from shelter goes against these ground-breaking programs and policies; and

WHEREAS, Domestic violence is a significant and pervasive problem affecting thousands of San Francisco residents and is one of the most chronically underreported crimes; now, therefore, be it

WHEREAS, On ____________, the Shelter Monitoring Committee unanimously approved policy recommendations to amend HSA’s Imminent Danger policy as it pertains to victims of domestic violence; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the adoption of the Shelter Monitoring Committee’s policy recommendations to the Human Services Agency’s Imminent Danger policy as it relates to victims of domestic violence, including the following:

a. Prohibition of a denial of service on the basis of being a victim of domestic violence;

b. Prohibition of a denial of service based on self-disclosure of domestic violence;

c. Requirement of the use of lethality assessments upon intake to assess all families for the risk of domestic violence;

d. Establishment of procedures in which shelters contact law enforcement for the provision of emergency protective orders in cases of domestic violence;

e. An update to the shelter training manual for shelter staff on how to handle domestic violence and other crisis situations; and
f. The inclusion of these policies in contracts upon renewal or establishment of new contracts with shelter providers; and, be it FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors reinforces its commitment to protecting and supporting victims of domestic violence in all aspects.