

1 [Lowering the jail visiting age to 16 and establishing an online inmate locator]

2 **Resolution promoting family unity for youth with incarcerated parents and urging the**
3 **lowering of the visiting age in San Francisco county jails to age 16 and the establishment of an**
4 **online inmate locator tool**

5 WHEREAS, 53% all U.S. inmates in 2007 were parents of one or more children under the age
6 of 18;¹ and

7 WHEREAS, according to the Center for Youth Wellness, incarceration is one of the most
8 adverse of childhood experiences; and

9 WHEREAS, according to the 2011 DCYF Community Needs Assessment, 17,993 children and
10 youth were estimated to have had a parent who spent time in either county jail or state prison in 2010,²
11 and s this number does not include youth and children who had a parent that was incarcerated at any
12 time during their childhood, and does not include transitional age youth, parental incarceration may
13 affect an even greater number of San Francisco’s young people; and

14 WHEREAS, visitation is a mediating factor in the adverse effect of parental incarceration;³ and

15 WHEREAS, the supervision required for 16 and 17 year olds to visit their parent may present
16 barriers to youth maintaining a relationship with their parent; and

17 WHEREAS, federal government permits persons 16 years age and older to visit inmates in
18 federal prisons; and

19 WHEREAS, Sheriff Mirkarimi has already undertaken efforts to lower phone call prices for
20 people incarcerated in San Francisco County jails to promote family unity; and

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22 ¹ Justice Strategies; “Children on the Outside: Voicing the Pain and Human Costs of Parental Incarceration,”
January 2011

23 ² 1,797 San Francisco children had a parent in California State prison. An estimated 16,196 San Francisco
24 children had a parent in custody for some period of time in 2010 at San Francisco County Jails. See: San
Francisco Department of Children, Youth, and Their Families, “2011 Community Needs Assessment,” Published
May 2011, Page 101.

25 ³ Joseph Murray, David P. Farrington; “Effects of Parental Imprisonment on Child Antisocial Behavior and Mental
Health: A Systemic Review”; September 2009

1 WHEREAS, the Sheriff along with HSA, Community Works, and SFCIPP are already working
2 to expand contact visits for children and youth under age seventeen; and

3 WHEREAS, many youth are already well served through the One Family visiting program, but
4 established family visiting programs cannot serve all youth who may wish to schedule visits with their
5 parents; and

6 WHEREAS, administrative and financial barriers to parental visitation were among the top
7 issues and concerns voiced by youth with incarcerated parents, formerly incarcerated people, and
8 service providers during a youth participatory action research effort undertaken by San Francisco
9 Project WHAT, a leadership program of youth with incarcerated parents, in 2013-2015;⁴ and

10 WHEREAS, call-in requests to locate a parent or loved one often take very long time; and

11 WHEREAS, county jails are a first point of contact in the criminal justice system, and may be
12 sites where parents are detained before their children have otherwise learned of a parent's arrest or
13 incarceration; and

14 WHEREAS, federal prisons, California state prisons, and several county jail systems including
15 Sacramento Alameda, and San Bernardino already have their online inmate locators; and

16 WHEREAS, there are now more people being detained at county level due to realignment; and

17 WHEREAS, the changes due to realignment are more cause to have an inmate locator and to
18 increase our efforts to support children in maintaining strong bonds with their parents during
19 incarceration; now therefore be it

20 RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Youth Commission commends the Sheriff Department's
21 self-evident commitment to maintaining and promoting relationships between youth and their
22 incarcerated parents; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Sherriff's Department to
24 lower the visiting age for regular visits in SF county jails to 16 years old; and be it further

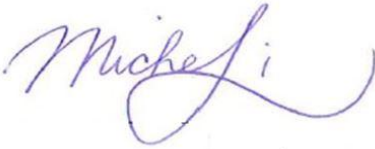
25 _____
⁴ *Project WHAT! Research Findings with SF Solutions*, February 2015

1 RESOLVED, that such a change to the visiting policy should not preclude youth 16 and 17
2 years old from also participating in contact visits through existing established visiting programs; and be
3 it further

4 RESOLVED, that the San Francisco Youth Commission urges that such a visiting policy should
5 include provisions for verifying the relationship of a child and parent, as well as the identity of the youth
6 visitor in a way that presents as few barriers to regular visitation as possible; and be it finally

7 RESOLVED, the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Sherriff's Department to create
8 an accessible online inmate locator that is searchable by first and last name, and without an inmate ID
9 number.

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Michel Li
2014-2015 Youth Commission Chair
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