

1 [Resolution urging the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to Support Efforts to Pre-Register 16-17 year
2 olds to Vote]

3 **Resolution urging the Mayor, Board of Supervisors, and the Department of Children, Youth,**
4 **and Their Families to support new efforts to increase voter pre-registration among 16 and 17**
5 **year olds**

6 WHEREAS, nationally and in California, young voters are the least likely group of citizens to
7 vote; and

8 WHEREAS, a large number of eligible youth in California are not even registered to vote, and
9 this is especially true among youth of color; and

10 WHEREAS, during the 2012 election, only 46% of eligible Latino youth, 41% of Asian
11 American/Pacific Islander eligible youth, 59% of white eligible youth, and 54% of African American
12 eligible youth were registered to vote, and those numbers were still far lower during the 2014 mid-term
13 elections; and

14 WHEREAS, in 2014, Governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill 113 by Sen. Hannah-Beth
15 Jackson (D-Santa Barbara) which allowed voter pre-registration beginning at age 16 once the
16 California statewide voter registration database, VoteCal, was certified; and

17 WHEREAS, VoteCal was certified in September 2016, and pre-registration was initially only
18 offered through paper forms and is now also available online through the Secretary of State’s
19 website;¹ and

20 WHEREAS, California is now the 21st state (including the District of Columbia) to grant those
21 under 18 the right to pre-register to vote; and

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25 ¹ <http://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/news-releases-and-advisories/2017-news-releases-and-advisories/16-and-17-year-olds-can-now-pre-register-vote-online/>

1 WHEREAS, voter pre-registration ensures that young voters are listed on the voter rolls the
2 moment they turn 18; and

3 WHEREAS, voter pre-registration is shown to increase voter turnout, especially when done in
4 concert with outreach programs; and

5 WHEREAS, strong voter turnout and voter engagement is the cornerstone of a healthy
6 democracy; and

7 WHEREAS, pre-registering 16 and 17 year olds in San Francisco will bridge the gap between
8 young voters and the ballot box and continue to build lifelong voters and strengthen our democracy;²
9 and

10 WHEREAS, educating and engaging more young people on the rights and responsibilities of
11 voting is among the best ways to encourage everyone, including and especially young people, to vote;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, San Francisco is leading the fight against President Trump at a time where our
14 President is threatening our city and our values, and working to take away voting rights; and

15 WHEREAS, we have an opportunity to continue progress in the field of expanding voting rights
16 by taking advantage of the new state policy allowing pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds; and

17 WHEREAS, in May 2016, the first joint Board of Supervisors and Youth Commission meeting
18 was held and garnered hours of public comment and attendance from hundreds of youth who showed
19 up to express their interest in voting and being included in the civic process; and
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24 ² Path to the Polls: Preregistering California's Youth to Build a More Participatory Democracy. Alana
25 Miller, Frontier Group Emily Rusch, CALPIRG Education Fund Rosalind Gold and Ofelia Medina,
NALEO Educational Fund. September 2016:

<http://calpirgedfund.org/sites/pirg/files/reports/CALPIRG%20NALEO%20-%20Path%20to%20the%20Polls%20-%20Sept%202016.pdf>

1 WHEREAS, the youth-led effort to expand voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds in San
2 Francisco lost by just 2.1% at the polls, but showed the ability of young people to unite and come to
3 the table with ideas, passion, and the will to participate; and

4 WHEREAS, Proposition F was almost entirely youth-led, and had the second largest group of
5 campaign volunteers in San Francisco's 2016 election; and

6 WHEREAS, momentum around increasing turnout of young and first-time voters has the
7 potential to continue through the implementation of the new state policy allowing 16 and 17 year olds
8 to pre-register to vote; and

9 WHEREAS, youth feel the negative effects of Trump being elected president, and now more
10 than ever believe that encouraging youth to participate in democracy and elections is extremely
11 critical, and being pre-registered to vote is a first step in civic involvement; and

12 WHEREAS, since our terms began in September 2016, Youth Commissioners have worked on
13 moving forward the effort to pre-register youth; and

14 WHEREAS, in February 2017, we met with the leadership of the Department of Children Youth
15 and their Families to discuss shared interest in seeing organizations funded to work with youth as a
16 grantees of DCYF extend pre-registration opportunities to the youth they will work with; and

17 WHEREAS, in 2017 we have continued a partnership with the Department of Elections and
18 have received a presentation on the current numbers of 16 and 17 year olds pre-registered, a training
19 on how to legally and ethically implement peer-led voter-pre registration efforts, and have acquired
20 special pre-registration forms that will allow the Department of Elections to track how many 16 and 17
21 year olds Youth Commissioners have pre-registered; now therefore be it
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23 RESOLVED, that the Youth Commission urges the Department of Children, Youth, and Their
24 Families to require older-youth-serving grantees to offer the youth they will work with the option of pre-
25 registering to vote beginning in 2018; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, that Youth Commissioners urge the Department of Children, Youth & Their
2 Families and the Department of Elections to explore opportunities for resourcing peer-led approaches
3 to increasing the pre-registration of 16 and 17 year olds and voting rights education using year-round
4 peer-to-peer outreach strategies; and be it finally

5 RESOLVED, that the Youth Commission urges the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to
6 maintain funding for outreach staff at the Department of Elections to focus on young voter registration
7 and outreach, even in non-election years, in recognition of the need to implement the new pre-
8 registration policy.

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