

1 [Lower San Francisco's Legal Voting Age to 16 Years of Age]

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3 **Resolution urging the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to lower San Francisco's**  
4 **legal voting age to sixteen in municipal and school district elections.**

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6 WHEREAS, Vote16USA is a national campaign, organized by Generation  
7 Citizen, that aims to support efforts to extend voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds on  
8 the local level, help start new local campaigns, and elevate the issue's prominence on a  
9 national level; and

10 WHEREAS, On May 3, 2016, for the first time ever, the San Francisco Board of  
11 Supervisors and San Francisco Youth Commission held a joint Committee of the Whole  
12 meeting to hear from youth in public comment on putting Vote16 on the ballot; and

13 WHEREAS, 9 out of 11 San Francisco Supervisors voted to put Vote16, which  
14 became Proposition F, onto the ballot in November 2016, where it lost by the close  
15 margin of 2.1%; and

16 WHEREAS, Proposition F was endorsed by former Board of Education  
17 Commissioners Sandra Lee Fewer, Shaman Walton, and Matt Haney, all of whom are  
18 now San Francisco Supervisors; and

19 WHEREAS, Proposition F was also endorsed by State Assembly Members David  
20 Chiu and Phil Ting in 2016, as well as by Former Supervisor and now State Senator  
21 Scott Wiener; and

22 WHEREAS, the San Francisco Democratic Central Committee, along with 17 San  
23 Francisco Democratic clubs [endorsed Proposition F in 2016](#)<sup>[1]</sup>; and

24 WHEREAS, Numerous countries—Austria, Argentina, Brazil, Germany, Norway  
25 and the United Kingdom—have extended the right to vote to 16 year olds in national,  
26 state, and local elections or are considering doing so, and these efforts have resulted in  
27 higher turnout among voters ages 16-17 than among voters age 18 and older; and

28 WHEREAS, in March 2019, twenty-eighth Assembly District Assemblymember,  
29 Evan Low, introduced Assembly Constitutional Amendment 8 (ACA 8) which proposes  
30 to lower the California voting age from 18 to 17 and is follow up legislation to his original  
31 ACA 10; and

1 WHEREAS, On March 14th, 2019, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi (D-CA  
2 12) publicly supported lowering the national voting age to 16, mainstreaming the  
3 lowering of the voting age; and

4 WHEREAS, on March 6th, 2019, Rep. Ayanna Pressley (D-MA 7) introduced an  
5 amendment to H.R. 1, or the *For the People Act* which would lower the national voting  
6 age to 16, and 135 Democratic Representatives voted to support it; and

7 WHEREAS, in 2016, Berkeley voters passed Measure Y1, which lowered the  
8 voting age to 16 for Berkeley Unified School District elections; and

9 WHEREAS, In May 2013, Takoma Park, Maryland became the first municipality  
10 in the United States to reduce its legal voting age to 16 years of age;<sup>[2]</sup> and

11 WHEREAS, Voter turnout among these newly enfranchised voters in Takoma  
12 Park was 44 percent, as compared to the overall voter turnout which was 11 percent;<sup>[3]</sup>  
13 and

14 WHEREAS, In December 2010, the Lowell, Massachusetts City Council proposed a  
15 resolution petitioning the Massachusetts State Legislature to lower the city's voting age  
16 to 17<sup>[4]</sup> and

17 WHEREAS, The Scottish government allowed 16 and 17 year olds to vote in its  
18 referendum on declaring independence from the United Kingdom, as well as general  
19 elections;<sup>[5]</sup> and

20 WHEREAS, These 16 and 17 year old voters used this opportunity to exercise  
21 their newfound right to vote en masse, with over 90 percent of 16 and 17 year old voters  
22 registering to vote in the Scottish independence referendum;<sup>[6]</sup> and

23 WHEREAS, In 2016 the San Francisco Youth Commission adopted Resolution  
24 No. 1617-AL-05<sup>[7]</sup> that supported the state legislation Assembly Constitutional  
25 Amendment 10 (ACA 10) introduced by twenty-eighth Assembly District  
26 Assemblymember, Evan Low, which would have “reduce[d] the minimum voting age [in  
27 California] to 17”; and

28 WHEREAS, In 2014 the San Francisco Youth Commission adopted Resolution  
29 No. 1314—02<sup>[8]</sup> that called on the Board of Supervisors and Youth-Serving  
30 Commissions to create a “Youth Voice” Policy that would allow more young people to

1 come to testify at public meetings to voice their concerns and opinions on legislation  
2 that would directly impact them; and

3 WHEREAS, Resolutions adopted by both the San Francisco Youth Commission  
4 (Resolution 0405-013)<sup>[9]</sup> and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors (File No.  
5 051215)<sup>[10]</sup> in 2005 supported expanding suffrage to citizens of 16 years and older in  
6 city and county elections; and

7 WHEREAS, Upon turning 16, young people can drive, work without limitations on  
8 hours, pay taxes, take classes on government in school, are subject to adult criminal  
9 charges, and yet are denied the right to vote; and

10 WHEREAS, Young people often feel excluded from being engaged in their  
11 government and are underrepresented in local government; and

12 WHEREAS, Extending voting rights to youth of 16 years of age would empower  
13 young people to become engaged in our local government; and

14 WHEREAS, Undocumented and incarcerated young people in the City and  
15 County of San Francisco currently have no outlet to directly impact policy other than  
16 physical activism, which many undocumented people consider to be dangerous; and

17 WHEREAS, With the right to vote, young people would increase their knowledge  
18 and interest in politics and the issues directly affecting them; and

19 WHEREAS, 16 year olds possess roughly the same political knowledge as 21  
20 year olds and come close to the average for all adults;<sup>[11]</sup> and

21 WHEREAS, Young people who vote will make voting habitual, as voting is a life-  
22 long practice begun once one casts their first vote; <sup>[12]</sup> and

23 WHEREAS, Young voters will be more likely to continue civic engagement  
24 throughout their lives than are those who begin voting later in life;<sup>[13]</sup> and

25 WHEREAS, Having young people voting at earlier ages would increase voter  
26 turnout in future elections and further stimulate interest in getting more involved in local  
27 government affairs; and

28 WHEREAS, Studies have proven 16 year old voters are competent and mature  
29 enough to make well-informed decisions that will influence their lives and the broader  
30 electorate;<sup>[14]</sup> and

1           WHEREAS, The median age of a San Francisco resident as of 2016 is 38, but  
2 the average age of the electorate has risen from 44.2 in 1980 to 45.8 and is projected to  
3 be 47.6 by 2025; and

4           WHEREAS, Young people have interests and priorities that differ from those of  
5 older voters and an aging electorate may neglect the interests of more diverse younger  
6 generations; and

7           WHEREAS, Between 2000 and 2013, San Francisco lost about 8,000<sup>[15]</sup> school  
8 age youth and now has the lowest percentage<sup>[16]</sup> of children of any major U.S. city; and

9           WHEREAS, The young people impacted by these trends are best positioned to  
10 identify solutions, and their political enfranchisement is a vital step toward combating  
11 family flight; and

12           WHEREAS, The city has seen fit to make investments in the leadership and civic  
13 engagement of young people that DYCF's Youth Leadership and Organizing programs,  
14 Youth Empowerment Fund, and annual Youth Advocacy Day, among other initiatives;  
15 and

16           WHEREAS, thousands of SFUSD high school students have cast votes in mock  
17 elections and ballot measures through the Youth Vote program, gaining exposure to the  
18 electoral process and civic norms and practices; and

19           WHEREAS, the current political moment has galvanized civic involvement  
20 among young people in SF in resistance to the current administration, with hundreds of  
21 students walking out on Inauguration Day and thousands participating in the March For  
22 Our Lives protests to make their voices heard; and

23           WHEREAS, frustrated with the inaction of the U.S. Government to address the  
24 crisis of human-made climate change, young people in SF and around the country are  
25 increasingly organizing to make their support for green policy and environmental justice  
26 known; and

27           WHEREAS, San Francisco hosts a vibrant community of youth advocates, youth  
28 organizers, and youth philanthropists who play critical roles in advising local nonprofits  
29 and city departments on matters pertaining to the youth of San Francisco and policy  
30 affecting them; and

1 WHEREAS, these youth leaders play a key role in the formation and revision of  
2 the city's youth policy but remain disenfranchised despite being recognized by the city  
3 and local nonprofits as community leaders; and

4 WHEREAS, Staff from the San Francisco Department of Elections was on hand  
5 at the Young Voters Forum to register new voters and recruit young people to work the  
6 polls on Election Day, these youth poll workers make up  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the total amount of poll  
7 workers each election in San Francisco; and

8 WHEREAS, Research consistently indicates 16-17 year-olds make voting  
9 decisions based on reasoned consideration of their own and larger interests in a fashion  
10 similar to older voters;<sup>[17]</sup> and

11 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Board of Supervisors added Rule 2.12.1<sup>[18]</sup> to the  
12 Board of Supervisors' Rules of Order in 2014, providing more opportunities for young  
13 people to meaningfully participate in public meetings; and

14 WHEREAS, Many states are enacting laws designed to severely limit  
15 communities of color and young people's voting rights, rolling back gains won through a  
16 proud history of struggle on behalf of African Americans and groups of young,  
17 multiracial activists; and

18 WHEREAS, San Francisco has an opportunity to take bold action to reverse  
19 these trends and stand for the political enfranchisement of young people; and

20 WHEREAS, As stated in Section 4.124 of the San Francisco City Charter, the  
21 Youth Commission is charged with identifying and proposing solutions to meet the  
22 unmet needs and concerns of San Francisco youth; and

23 WHEREAS, The Youth Commission believes that young people's ability to  
24 engage in electoral processes that directly impact them is an unmet need; now,  
25 therefore, be it

26 RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the Board of  
27 Supervisors to lower San Francisco's city and school district voting age eligibility to 16  
28 years of age or older; and, be it

29 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the  
30 Board of Supervisors to urge San Francisco's elected state representatives—State  
31 Senator Scott Wiener, Assembly members Philip Y. Ting and David Chiu—to prepare

1 legislation that would provide for a state constitutional amendment to reduce the voting  
2 age to sixteen for all state elections; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the  
4 Board of Supervisors to pass a resolution in support of Assembly Constitutional  
5 Amendment 8 (ACA-8) and, be it

6 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the Mayor and the  
7 Board of Supervisors to prepare a charter amendment to relevant sections of the San  
8 Francisco Charter allowing citizens, and possibly non-citizens, of 16 years of age and  
9 older to vote and register in municipal and school district elections held in the City and  
10 County of San Francisco.

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Bahlam Vigil, Chair,  
2018-19 Youth Commission  
Adopted on May 6, 2019

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22 [vote/2013/05/14/b27c52c4-bccd-11e2-89c9-3be8095fe767\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/takoma-park-grants-16-year-olds-right-to-vote/2013/05/14/b27c52c4-bccd-11e2-89c9-3be8095fe767_story.html)

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26 [turnout-among-](http://www.governing.com/news/headlines/gov-maryland-city-sees-high-turnout-among-teens-after-election-reform.html)

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2 [2014-Scottish-Independence-Referendum-Voting-Guide.pdf](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0012/170400/The-2014-Scottish-Independence-Referendum-Voting-Guide.pdf)

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13 [9] San Francisco Youth Commission Resolution 0405—AL013 "Resolution Urging the  
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