[Survivors of Sexual Harassment and Assault - Support and Supportive Services]

Resolution urging the City and County of San Francisco to support Survivors of Sexual Harassment and Assault.

WHEREAS, Sexual violence is a social and cultural problem, rather than an individual problem; and

WHEREAS, Systemic gender-inequality, toxic masculinity, and power imbalances foster an environment that perpetuates and promotes violence; and

WHEREAS, That all institutions have a role, one that supports survivors and their healing and builds a climate of accountability and culture free of sexual violence; and

WHEREAS, Recently, sexual harassment and assault allegations have been widely shared by San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) students and other Bay Area students via social media, including an accusation against former Youth Commissioner Drew Min; and

WHEREAS, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education, including K-12 schools; and

WHEREAS, SFUSD’s sexual harassment policy (State Education Code and Board Policy 5166) states that “the Board prohibits sexual harassment of students by other students, employees or other persons, at school or at school-sponsored or school-related activities;” and

WHEREAS, According to Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN), the nation’s largest anti-sexual violence organization, someone is sexually assaulted in America every 73 seconds; and
WHEREAS, Those aged 12-34 are at the highest risk of rape and sexual assault, as the majority of sexual assault victims are under 30; and
WHEREAS, Females aged 16-19 are 4 times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape or sexual assault; and
WHEREAS, 21 percent of transgender, genderqueer, and nonconforming (TGQN) college students have been sexually assaulted, compared to 18 percent of cisgender females and 4 percent of cisgender males; and
WHEREAS, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) are disproportionately victims of sexual assault, especially Native Americans, who are twice as likely to experience rape or sexual assault than any other race; and
WHEREAS, According to a study conducted by the California Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CCASA), in California, more than 86 percent of women (compared with 81 percent nationally) and 53 percent of men (compared with 43 percent nationally) report having experienced some form of sexual harassment and/or assault in their lifetime; and
WHEREAS, According to the San Francisco Police Department, instances of rape in San Francisco rose 7.31 percent from 2017 to 2018; and
WHEREAS, On May 6, 2020, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos passed new Title IX regulations, where college institutions must presume that all those accused of sexual misconduct are innocent prior to the investigative process, which protects perpetrators of sexual misconduct; and
WHEREAS, According to Inside Higher Ed, these new regulations set higher evidence and cross-examination standards, which can retraumatize and prevent victims from reporting sexual assault; and
WHEREAS, According to RAINN, the likelihood that a person suffers suicidal or depressive thoughts increases after sexual violence, as 94 percent of women who are raped,
experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) two weeks after the rape, 33 percent of women who are raped contemplate suicide, and 13 percent of women who are raped attempt suicide; and

WHEREAS, In partnership with more than 1,000 local sexual assault service providers, RAINN operates a national sexual assault hotline (1-800-656-4673) that provides confidential support from trained staff members, support in finding local health facilities that are trained to care for survivors of sexual assault, and local resources that can assist survivors in the healing and recovery process; and

WHEREAS, There are numerous community organizations in San Francisco that offer emotional and legal support for sexual assault survivors, including LYRIC, Asian Pacific Islander (API) Legal Outreach, and San Francisco Women Against Rape, all of which have local programs and resources that support survivors; and

WHEREAS, These programs are not actively promoted in schools, so students are not aware of or connected to these organizations and the resources available to them; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed legislation in 2016 to create the Safer Schools Sexual Assault Task Force, which met monthly from November 2016 to November 2017; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force met monthly to analyze state and federal laws regarding campus sexual assault, recommend best practices for colleges and universities in San Francisco to reduce sexual assault, and recommend steps that the City can take to reduce sexual assault on college and university campuses; and

WHEREAS, The Safer Schools Sexual Assault Task Force Report and Recommendations did not include any specific recommendations for reducing sexual assault on elementary, middle school, and high school campuses; and
WHEREAS, The Task Force did not invite young people to provide input and feedback on the report and recommendations; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, the United States Department of Justice conducted an audit of the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) and produced 272 reform recommendations, none of which addressed the conditions in the department’s Special Victims Unit and its treatment of rape survivors; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, ABC7 News reported that SFPD had found 753 untested rape kits from 2003 to 2013, despite a law passed four years earlier by the Board of Supervisors mandating that all rape kits be tested; and

WHEREAS, In 2004, the Youth Commission and the SFUSD Student Advisory Council (SAC) hosted a community hearing with representatives of community-based organizations and various government agencies to understand the current situation of sexual harassment and assault in San Francisco schools; and

WHEREAS, In April 2005, the Youth Commission and SFUSD SAC produced the San Francisco Youth Commission Report on Sexual Assault and Harassment in San Francisco Schools, including information from the hearing, SFUSD student input, and recommendations to City agencies; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission stands with all survivors of sexual harassment and assault and condemns the actions of all perpetrators of sexual harassment and assault; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the District Attorney’s office and SFPD to test all rape kits and begin an investigation within 48 hours of receiving them; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges SFPD to properly and legally assist survivors in filing a police report, getting medical care, holding the perpetrator...
accountable, and maintaining a survivor’s legal rights in a timely manner, without causing increased trauma; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges SFPD to have survivors solely interact with experts trained in trauma-informed counseling, such as social workers and domestic violence counselors, unless necessary under law, to ensure survivors do not endure further trauma and gaslighting; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the San Francisco Department of Police Accountability to ensure SFPD supports all survivors of sexual harassment and assault and follows all laws and regulations; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges SFUSD to follow the recommendations of SFUSD SAC in their Title IX resolution; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges SFUSD to adopt mandatory trainings for youth, educators, and school site staff on the definitions of sexual harassment and assault, reporting procedures, supporting students, and identifying and preventing these crimes; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Youth Commission urges the Board of Education to pass a resolution affirming survivor’s rights and access to supportive resources when sexually assaulted or harassed on a SFUSD campus and/or by a SFUSD student or employee.

Josephine Cureton, Chair
Adopted on July 20, 2020
2019-2020 San Francisco Youth Commission