Resolution urging the City of San Francisco to implement a Universal Basic Income Program.

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic has led to soaring unemployment rates worldwide; and

WHEREAS, The global crisis has sparked renewed interest in Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a solution to address this problem by providing residents with a guaranteed income payment; and

WHEREAS, UBI is a cash payment that residents receive every month from the government with no strings attached; and

WHEREAS, Government officials across the world are considering implementing UBI programs to alleviate financial losses and uplift underserved communities; and

WHEREAS, Experts believe that a basic income can help curb poverty, allow for creative and useful forms of unpaid labor to flourish, improve mental well-being, and provide financial security for communities in need; and

WHEREAS, In 1967, Martin Luther King Jr. proposed a guaranteed income for American citizens, stating that it could reduce income inequality and abolish poverty; and

WHEREAS, Economist Milton Friedman proposed a negative income tax to allow people from lower-income backgrounds to receive a tax credit; and

WHEREAS, UBI was popularized by former 2020 Presidential Candidate Andrew Yang as a way to offset job losses caused by automation and artificial intelligence; and

WHEREAS, UBI has many proven benefits, including increased financial security, improved mental well-being, and overall better quality of life; and
WHEREAS, UBI can expand financial freedom for recipients so that college students can pay for tuition and caregivers can take sick days to care for family or relatives; and
WHEREAS, UBI can improve the quality of life and mental well-being for residents, particularly those who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds; and
WHEREAS, UBI can allow people to expand on their hobbies and creative pursuits, such as music, arts, and entrepreneurship; and
WHEREAS, As seen during COVID-19, a basic income can help stabilize the economy during recessions; and
WHEREAS, A basic income has no specific income conditions, so there would be less bureaucratic work on auditing payments; and
WHEREAS, It would cost less to administer UBI than many existing welfare programs by eliminating processes like auditing income-verification paperwork; and
WHEREAS, UBI also has fewer restrictions than many traditional welfare programs that perpetuate structural inequalities by setting income and background restrictions; and
WHEREAS, UBI recipients won’t have to go through a lengthy approval process or adhere by existing income restrictions; and
WHEREAS, Grassroots organizations such as Humanity Forward, Income Movement, Youth For UBI, The Gerald Huff Fund for Humanity, and many others, are working to pass UBI legislation across the country; and
WHEREAS, There are successful UBI pilot programs that have shown positive results; and
WHEREAS, The state of Alaska has had an active UBI program since 1982; and
WHEREAS, Stockton Mayor Michael D. Tubbs started the Stockton Economic Empowerment Demonstration (SEED), a pilot program that gives $500 a month to 125 local families in Stockton, California; and
WHEREAS, SEED has found that providing a cash payment to residents has increased economic security for working-class families, who spent the money on basic necessities like paying for groceries, utilities, transportation, and rent; and

WHEREAS, A 2017-2018 national, government-backed basic income experiment by the Finnish government gave 2,000 unemployed residents aged 25-58 a monthly basic income with no specific requirements while a control group received normal unemployment benefits at the same time; and

WHEREAS, The study found that basic income recipients had improved overall well-being, and were generally more satisfied with their lives and experienced less mental strain and depression than the control group; and

WHEREAS, The researchers also noted that children and families who received a basic income had greater feelings of autonomy, financial security, and confidence in the future; and

WHEREAS, Participants who were freelancers, artists, and entrepreneurs said UBI created opportunities for them to pursue their dreams; and

WHEREAS, Participants also volunteered more often and got involved with community initiatives at higher rates than before; and

WHEREAS, A basic income study called ‘Mincome’ was conducted in a small, rural town of Dauphin, Canada, where families were guaranteed $16,000 annually; and

WHEREAS, The study saw rates of hospitalizations fall, improvements in mental health, and a rise in the number of children who graduated from high school; and

WHEREAS, There was an 8.5% decline in hospitalizations due to a decrease in stress-induced mental health issues; and

WHEREAS, Researchers of the experiment believe this was a direct result of the added security in people’s lives provided by a basic income; and
WHEREAS, The Hawaii State Legislature passed a bill asking the government to implement a UBI program to help citizens receive permanent financial security; and

WHEREAS, Canada is experimenting with a three-year UBI program by giving 4,000 residents living in poverty with monthly payments; and

WHEREAS, Scotland committed 250,000 pounds to four pilot programs that pay citizens for life; and

WHEREAS, Finland gave 2,000 unemployed citizens 560 euros a month for two years; and

WHEREAS, Recipients of the basic income in Finland said the payment reduced stress, with many of them saying they received financial freedom to start their own business; and

WHEREAS, Since 2011, the international nongovernmental organization GiveDirectly, Inc. has provided Unconditional Cash Transfers (UCT) to poor households in Kenya; and

WHEREAS, GiveDirectly, Inc. found that distributing cash payments improved the consumption of food, medicine, education, and social events; and

WHEREAS, Citizens in the program also had improved overall well-being and increased investments in livestock, furniture, and home improvements; and

WHEREAS, Based on a number of pilot studies around the world, there is evidence that a basic income has lasting, long-term impacts on young people; and

WHEREAS, Youth who receive a basic income are more likely to complete their secondary school education because the pressure to earn money to support their family is eased; and

WHEREAS, Young people can utilize cash payments to pay off their tuition or student debt; and


WHEREAS, UBI grants youth the financial freedom to pursue a third-level education or internships that can provide them with crucial experience for future professions; and

WHEREAS, UBI encourages youth to be civically engaged and volunteer more; and

WHEREAS, A basic income has been shown to be effective in addressing poverty in families, particularly for single parents and single-income households; and

WHEREAS, In Canada, an increase in child benefits led to a drop in poverty rates and addressed economic inequality; and

WHEREAS, In Native American communities living along the Rio Grande, the introduction of casino revenue payouts led to a decrease in child and spousal abuse; and

WHEREAS, In Eastern Cherokee households in North Carolina, income transfer payments led to increased voter turnout among adults who had been disadvantaged as children; and

WHEREAS, A guaranteed basic income could be a good way to increase civic engagement and narrow the gap in political participation between wealthier households and people from underprivileged backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, American startup accelerator Y Combinator is paying 100 families in Oakland, California between one thousand to two thousand dollars a month; and

WHEREAS, A research team at the University of Chicago, in collaboration with nonprofit organization Point Source Youth, are developing biweekly, direct cash assistance for youth experiencing homelessness in New York City; and

WHEREAS, The program will also offer counseling, housing navigation, and connections to services that support young people’s pathways to self-defined success; and

WHEREAS, The Santa Clara government recognized the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on foster youth; and
WHEREAS, In May 2020, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors approved a plan to provide 72 young adults ages 21 to 24, who were former foster youth, with one thousand dollar monthly payments for a one-year pilot program; and

WHEREAS, Santa Clara County officials will provide youth in the program with financial services and will check-in with them regularly to obtain information on how they spend the money and how the basic income impacts them; and

WHEREAS, A labor economist at the University of Pennsylvania who has studied social welfare believes that an unconditional cash payment like the one instituted by Santa Clara County officials can improve youth mental health, increase educational achievement, and promote greater voting and civic participation among young people; and

WHEREAS, According to the Chronicle of Social Change, cash transfers for young people impart what economists call “positive spillover effects”; and

WHEREAS, UBI pilot programs geared towards youth has found overwhelming evidence that low-income and vulnerable populations spend the money on basic needs; and

WHEREAS, When youth spend cash on goods and services in their community, they help stimulate their local economy; and

WHEREAS, According to numerous studies, the Bay Area has the highest income inequality in the state of California; and

WHEREAS, The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) analyzed the 2018 U.S. Census Bureau data and found that top income earners in the Bay Area make 12.2 times as much as those who are at the bottom of the economic ladder; and

WHEREAS, PPIC also found that Bay Area residents in the 90th percentile of incomes earn on average $384,000 a year compared to $32,000 for those in the bottom 10th percentile; and
WHEREAS, The 2018 Census data shows that San Francisco County has the widest income disparities in the Bay Area, with the top five percent of households making an average of $808,105 annually compared to $16,184 for the bottom twenty percent of households; and

WHEREAS, According to the San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco ranks 84 out of 100 regions in the United States for economic inclusion; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, the earnings of white residents in San Francisco were $70,200 annually while earnings for people of color were $41,500; and

WHEREAS, That gap continues to widen, having grown by $2588 in 2017 alone; and

WHEREAS, According to The Chronicle of Social Change, legacies of systemic racism in housing and employment has led black and brown families to have less disposable income to give young adult family members to cover basic needs; and

WHEREAS, The Brookings Institute found that San Francisco has the sixth-highest level of income inequality in the country; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco residents at the 20th percentile of earnings make $31,840 per household annually, as compared to those at the 95th percentile, who bring in $507,824 per household; and

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 global pandemic has amplified existing inequities in our government and educational institutions, especially for marginalized youth of color; and

WHEREAS, The sudden closure of schools in San Francisco has resulted in students not receiving adequate meals, increased rates of job loss for youth and their parents, and an overall decline in educational quality; and

WHEREAS, After the San Francisco Unified School District transitioned to online learning, more than 12,000 Chromebook laptops were distributed and loaned to students in need; and
WHEREAS, Despite these efforts, in April 2020, an estimated 5,000 students still could
not attend class virtually because their family couldn’t afford adequate internet service at
home; and

WHEREAS, A March 2020 study conducted by the Pew Research Center found that
workers ages 16-24 make up 24 percent of all frontline workers in the industries most affected
by COVID-19 closures; and

WHEREAS, Low-income youth of color, who have been most severely impacted by the
COVID-19 crisis in San Francisco, should be included in the recovery process; and

WHEREAS, UBI would be a viable solution to address this growing income inequality
and empower underserved communities; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the San Francisco
Board of Supervisors (BOS), Mayor, and City departments to work with community
organizations and study the impacts of a guaranteed basic income on San Francisco’s
children, teens, and families; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the Mayor
to join Mayors for Guaranteed Income, a coalition of mayors and city leaders from 11
American cities who are investing in guaranteed-income pilots and are advocating for state
and federal cash-based policies; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the BOS
and Mayor to enact legislation to implement a guaranteed basic income program in San
Francisco; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Youth Commission urges the BOS
and Mayor to include financial services, housing navigation, and counseling workshops for
young people ages 16+ in conjunction with the UBI program.
Josephine Cureton, Chair
Adopted on July 20, 2020
2019-2020 San Francisco Youth Commission