

1 [Lower San Francisco’s Legal Voting Age to 16 Years of Age]
2 **Resolution requesting the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to place a Charter**
3 **Amendment to lower the legal voting age in San Francisco Municipal and School**
4 **District Elections on the November 2024 Election Ballot.**

5 WHEREAS, Allowing 16 and 17 year-olds the right to vote would engage and
6 empower a whole new generation of people in the democratic process and instill the
7 value of civic engagement and voting in young people; and,

8 WHEREAS, Allowing 16 and 17 year-olds to vote would demonstrate the value of
9 their voices, opinions, and lived experiences to the democratic process, and add a
10 greater diversity of voices to the electorate; and,

11 WHEREAS, By age 16, youth have developed the intellectual maturity for
12 measured, non-rushed, and sufficient decision-making skills (i.e. “cold cognition”)
13 needed for making responsible voting choices, according to research published by the
14 American Psychological Association¹; and,

15 WHEREAS, According to the Pew Research Center², Countries such as
16 Argentina, Austria, and Germany, that have (at least partial) voting rights for 16 and 17
17 year-olds, all outrank the United States in voter turnout; and,

18 WHEREAS, Upon turning 16 or 17, young people are legally able to drive, work,
19 pay taxes, be charged adult criminal charges, enlist in the military, and yet are denied
20 the right to vote; and,

¹ Steinberg, L. (2009). Are adolescents less mature than adults?. Are Adolescents Less Mature Than Adults? <https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/amp-64-7-583.pdf>
² DeSilver, D. (2022). Turnout in U.S. has soared in recent elections but by some measures still trails that of many other countries. Pew Research Center.
<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2022/11/01/turnout-in-u-s-has-soared-in-recent-elections-but-by-some-measures-still-trails-that-of-many-other-countries/>

1 WHEREAS, Research shows that allowing young people to vote at earlier ages
2 increases voter turnout in future elections and further stimulate interest in getting more
3 involved in local government affairs³; and,

4 WHEREAS, Research further shows that voting while still attending school
5 encourages voting and electoral engagement to become a habit, and

6 WHEREAS, In 2005, resolutions adopted by both the San Francisco Youth
7 Commission (Resolution No. 0405-013) and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors
8 (File No. 051215) supported expanding suffrage to citizens of 16 years and older in City
9 and County of San Francisco elections; and,

10 WHEREAS, In 2016, the San Francisco Youth Commission adopted Resolution
11 No. 1617-AL-05 which supported California Assembly Constitutional Amendment 10,
12 proposing to reduce the minimum voting age in California elections to 17; and,

13 WHEREAS, In 2016, 9 out of 11 San Francisco Supervisors voted to put File No.
14 150267 (also known as "Vote16") onto the ballot, which became Proposition F, but lost
15 by the close margin of 2.1% in the 2016 election; and

16 WHEREAS, In 2019, the San Francisco Youth Commission adopted Resolution
17 No. 1819-AL-1, urging the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to lower San Francisco's
18 legal voting age to 16 in municipal and school district elections, reaffirming the Youth
19 Commission's support for Vote16; and,

20 WHEREAS, In 2020, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously voted
21 to put Vote16 on to the ballot, which became Proposition G, but lost by less than 1% in
22 the 2020 election; and,

³ Elias Dinas (2012) The Formation of Voting Habits, Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties, 22:4, 431-456, DOI: 10.1080/17457289.2012.718280

1 WHEREAS, According to Section 4.124 of the San Francisco City Charter, the
2 Youth Commission is tasked with identifying and proposing solutions to address the
3 unmet needs and concerns of the youth of San Francisco, and

4 WHEREAS, The Youth Commission believes that young people’s ability to
5 engage in electoral processes that directly impact their livelihood is a unmet need; and
6 be it

7 RESOLVED, that the 2022-2023 Youth Commission reaffirms its commitment in
8 advocating for the expansion of voting rights to youth aged 16-17 year olds in municipal
9 and school district elections, and be it

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