

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, Teens, in San Francisco and across the country, have engaged in  
12 political issues like climate action, gun safety policies, LGBTQ+ rights and protections,  
13 safe street design, reproductive healthcare rights, and more through protests, social  
14 media campaigns, lobbying elected officials, volunteering/working on political  
15 campaigns, and serving on public bodies, showing there is major political engagement  
16 and opinions from teens; and

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

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

1           WHEREAS, Youth voter turnout in the United States hit historic highs in the  
2 2018, 2020, and 2022 elections, with some of the highest participation rates for people  
3 aged 18-29 since the voting age was lowered to 18, showing Generation Z is more  
4 politically active and engaged than previous generations; and

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

8           WHEREAS, Research shows that allowing young people to vote at earlier ages  
9 increases voter turnout in future elections and further stimulate interest in getting more  
10 involved in local government affairs; and,

11           WHEREAS, Research further shows that voting while still attending school  
12 encourages making voting and electoral engagement to become a habit, and

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

17           WHEREAS, In 2005, resolutions adopted by both the San Francisco Youth  
18 Commission (Resolution No. 0405-013) and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
19 (File No. 051215) supported expanding suffrage to citizens of 16 years and older in City  
20 and County of San Francisco elections (Vote16); and

21           WHEREAS, Berkeley voters passed Measure Y1 in 2016, which lowered the  
22 voting age to 16 for Berkeley Unified School District elections, showing support for  
23 Vote16 in the Bay Area; and

1           WHEREAS, Takoma Park, Maryland became the first municipality in the United  
2 States to reduce its legal voting age to 16 years of age in May 2013, and in the following  
3 election voter turnout for newly enfranchised voters aged 16 and 17 was 44%, while  
4 overall voter turnout was just 11%; and

5           WHEREAS, The Scottish Government allowed 16 and 17 year olds to vote in the  
6 2014 Independence Referendum, as well as in Scottish Parliament elections, and this  
7 resulted in over 90% of Scottish 16 and 17 year olds registering to vote in the  
8 referendum; and

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

12           WHEREAS, On May 3, 2016, for the first time ever, the San Francisco Board of  
13 Supervisors and the San Francisco Youth Commission held a joint Committee of the  
14 Whole hearing on putting Vote16 on the ballot; and

15           WHEREAS, In 2016, 9 out of 11 San Francisco Supervisors voted to put Vote16  
16 onto the ballot, which became Proposition F, but lost by the close margin of 2.1% in the  
17 2016 election; and

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

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

4           WHEREAS, Proposition G gathered support and endorsements from a wide  
5 range of elected and appointed leaders, political organizations, and individuals,  
6 including Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi, California Senator Scott Wiener, then-  
7 Assemblymember David Chiu, Assemblymember Phil Ting, Mayor London Breed, all  
8 then-Supervisors, all then-Board of Education Commissioners, the San Francisco  
9 Democratic Party, the San Francisco Women's Political Committee, the United  
10 Democratic Club, the Alice B. Toklas LGBTQ Democratic Club, the Harvey Milk LGBTQ  
11 Democratic Club, the Eastern Neighborhoods Democratic Club, the San Francisco  
12 Young Democrats, the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, San Francisco League of  
13 Conservation Voters, the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research  
14 Association (SPUR), and newspapers the San Francisco Examiner and the Bay  
15 Guardian; and

16           WHEREAS, According to Section 4.124 of the San Francisco Charter, the Youth  
17 Commission is tasked with identifying and proposing solutions to address the unmet  
18 needs and concerns of the youth of San Francisco, and

19           WHEREAS, The Youth Commission believes that young people's ability to  
20 engage in electoral processes that directly impact their livelihood is a unmet need; and  
21 so be it

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

4           FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Youth Commission requests the Mayor and  
5   Board of Supervisors to prepare a charter amendment to relevant sections of the San  
6   Francisco Charter allowing citizens of 16 years of age and older to vote and register in  
7   municipal and school district elections held in the City and County of San Francisco.