

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, The Participatory Budgeting process utilized by Supervisors Norman
18 Yee and Myrna Melgar, which allows residents to democratically determine budget
19 priorities, has allowed 16 and 17 year old District 7 residents to vote, showing the value
20 of their views and opinions when it comes to spending city funds; and

21 WHEREAS, By age 16, youth have developed the intellectual maturity for
22 measured, non-rushed, and sufficient decision-making skills (i.e. "cold cognition")

1 needed for making responsible voting choices, according to research published by the
2 American Psychological Association; and

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

6 WHEREAS, Youth voter turnout in the United States hit historic highs in the
7 2018, 2020, and 2022 elections, with some of the highest participation rates for people
8 aged 18-29 since the voting age was lowered to 18, showing Generation Z is more
9 politically active and engaged than previous generations; and

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

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS, In 2005, resolutions adopted by both the San Francisco Youth
23 Commission (Resolution No. 0405-013) and the San Francisco Board of Supervisors

1 (File No. 051215) supported expanding suffrage to citizens of 16 years and older in City
2 and County of San Francisco elections (Vote16); and

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

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

10 WHEREAS, The Scottish Government allowed 16 and 17 year olds to vote in the
11 2014 Independence Referendum, as well as in Scottish Parliament elections, and this
12 resulted in over 90% of Scottish 16 and 17 year olds registering to vote in the
13 referendum; and

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

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

20 WHEREAS, In 2016, 9 out of 11 San Francisco Supervisors voted to put Vote16
21 onto the ballot, which became Proposition F, but lost by the close margin of 2.1% in the
22 2016 election; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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