

1 [Supporting Assembly Bill No. 990 (Santiago) - Family Unity - Incarcerated Persons' Visiting  
Rights]

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3 **Resolution supporting California State Assembly Bill No. 990, "Family Unity -**  
4 **Incarcerated Persons' Visiting Rights," authored by Assembly Member Miguel Santiago**  
5 **(AD-53), to establish personal visits for incarcerated people as a right.**

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7 WHEREAS, There are many barriers to maintaining family bonds during incarceration;  
8 and

9 WHEREAS, Visits are treated as a privilege rather than a right and can be denied for  
10 disciplinary reasons unrelated to visiting or for simple mistakes on paperwork; and

11 WHEREAS, Family members can be excluded based on arrest or conviction histories  
12 unrelated to visiting security, which further divides families who live in communities that are  
13 heavily policed and impacted by mass incarceration; and

14 WHEREAS, Visits can be very expensive and time-consuming, as many people in  
15 California are incarcerated hundreds of miles from their homes; and

16 WHEREAS, After taking the long, costly trip to visit a loved one, visitors often face long  
17 waiting times that use up limited visiting hours, or are turned away or removed for petty  
18 reasons such as wearing a V-neck shirt, having inadequate documentation, or holding hands  
19 too long; and

20 WHEREAS, Screening process can be disrespectful and intimidating to children, such  
21 as contraband searches of minors and strip searches of women by correctional staff; and

22 WHEREAS. Family members of loved ones who get seriously sick in custody, including  
23 those who have died of COVID, often receive no notice or opportunity to call or visit; and

24 WHEREAS, Phone and video calling access is limited and has historically been grossly  
25 overpriced and while the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)

1 recently took steps to increase such access and reduce costs, those gains need to be  
2 guaranteed by law with a commitment that they supplement rather than supplant in-person  
3 visiting; and

4 WHEREAS, The loss of family connections has received renewed attention due to the  
5 COVID pandemic, which has led to the wholesale cancellation of in-person visits and only  
6 minimal increases in phone communications in our state prisons; and

7 WHEREAS, Significant barriers to visitations and phone contact existed before the  
8 pandemic and have only been exasperated since; and

9 WHEREAS, California State Assembly Bill No. 990 (AB 990), the Family Unity –  
10 Incarcerated Persons’ Visiting Rights, introduced by Assembly Member Miguel Santiago (AD-  
11 53), establishes personal visits for incarcerated people as a right, rather than a privilege, and  
12 ensures that revoking the visitation right is limited to special circumstances; and

13 WHEREAS, AB 990 addresses the current problems with limited visiting in prisons by  
14 removing barriers to visits in order to ensure families remain connected; and

15 WHEREAS, Specifically, AB 990 will reinstate incarcerated persons’ right to receive  
16 visits in the Prisoners’ Bill of Rights and the prior legal standard for enforcement of that right;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, AB 990 will prohibit denial of visits as discipline for conduct unrelated to  
19 visiting, prohibit denial of visits based on mistakes on a visitors’ application where the correct  
20 information is in the visitor’s criminal background report, and prohibit denial of visits based on  
21 the visitor’s or incarcerated person’s law enforcement history unless related to serious abuses  
22 of visiting rules; and

23 WHEREAS, By establishing incarcerated persons’ right to personal visits, AB 990 will  
24 support families with incarcerated persons, improve emotional connections during  
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1 incarceration, and ultimately help incarcerated people thrive once they return to their  
2 community; now, therefore, be it

3 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby supports California  
4 Assembly Bill No. 990, The Family Unity – Incarcerated Persons’ Visiting Rights” and urges  
5 the California State Legislature to pass this bill in order to ensure families with incarcerated  
6 persons remain connected by improving emotional connections during incarceration and  
7 ultimately help incarcerated people thrive once they return to their community; and, be it,

8 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges Governor Gavin Newsom to pass  
9 AB 990; and, be it

10 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors hereby directs the Clerk of the  
11 Board to transmit a copy of this Resolution to Governor Gavin Newsom and the Bill’s primary  
12 sponsor, Assembly Member Miguel Santiago.

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