

1 [Inconsistent Policies of American Online]

2 URGING AMERICA ONLINE (AOL) TO CREATE STANDARDS SENSITIVE TO THE  
3 LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY AND TO END THEIR  
4 PRACTICE OF CENSORING GAY CONTENT MUCH MORE FREQUENTLY THAN  
5 CONTENT THAT INCLUDES PROFANITIES, SEXUAL CONTENT OR HATE SPEECH BY  
6 NON-GAY MEMBERS.

7 WHEREAS, Recently, America Online (AOL) has been accused of censoring the way  
8 gay members describe themselves online while ignoring gay-bashing remarks from other  
9 members; and,

10 WHEREAS, The American Civil Liberties Union, NationalGayLobby.Org and Hate  
11 Watch criticized AOL on their Web sites for preventing a gay member from including sexually  
12 suggestive information about himself in his personal profile, while allowing other members to  
13 litter their profiles with racist comments and hate rhetoric; and,

14 WHEREAS, AOL members typically create profiles to publicly describe themselves and  
15 their interests; and,

16 WHEREAS, AOL recently deleted the profile of a gay man, informing the member that  
17 his description violated the company's terms of service agreement, which states, "It is essential  
18 that (content created by members) reflects our community standards, and we may remove it if, in  
19 our best judgment, it does not meet those standards"; and,

20 WHEREAS, It has been reported that of the profiles censored by AOL, the majority had  
21 been deleted because of gay content; and,

22 WHEREAS, In addition, AOL has software that automatically censors racial slurs against  
23 many ethnic groups, but has no policy or software that deletes hate speech against gays and  
24 lesbians, some of which has been found to be very threatening; and,

1           WHEREAS, AOL has a responsibility to be more proactive about fighting hate speech  
2 and to create policies that apply to all groups and communities; and,

3           WHEREAS, AOL's awareness and sensitivity to the gay community has been questioned  
4 before when one of its employees turned over a gay member's name to a Navy investigator who  
5 then initiated discharge proceedings against the serviceman; now, therefore, be it

6           RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco urges America Online (AOL) to  
7 create standards sensitive to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and to end  
8 their practice of censoring gay content much more frequently than content that includes  
9 profanities, sexual content or hate speech by non-gay members.

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# City and County of San Francisco

City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

## Tails

### Resolution

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**File Number:** 992004

**Date Passed:**

Resolution urging America Online (AOL) to create a standards sensitive to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and to end their practice of censoring gay content much more frequently than content that includes profanities, sexual content or hate speech by non-gay members.

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November 1, 1999 Board of Supervisors — SEVERED FROM CONSENT AGENDA

November 1, 1999 Board of Supervisors — AMENDED, AN AMENDMENT OF THE WHOLE BEARING NEW TITLE

Ayes: 8 - Becerril, Bierman, Brown, Katz, Kaufman, Leno, Newsom, Teng  
Absent: 3 - Ammiano, Yaki, Yee

November 1, 1999 Board of Supervisors — ADOPTED AS AMENDED

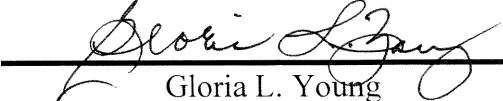
Ayes: 8 - Becerril, Bierman, Brown, Katz, Kaufman, Leno, Newsom, Teng  
Absent: 3 - Ammiano, Yaki, Yee

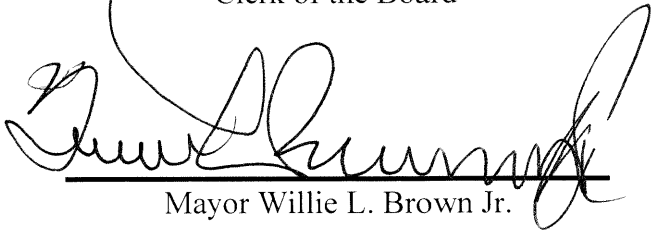
File No. 992004

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution  
was **ADOPTED AS AMENDED** on  
November 1, 1999 by the Board of  
Supervisors of the City and County of San  
Francisco.

NOV 12 1999

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Approved

  
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Gloria L. Young  
Clerk of the Board

  
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Mayor Willie L. Brown Jr.