

348-09

FILE NO. 090995

RESOLUTION NO.

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[Urging the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to conduct a comprehensive investigation on hate speech in the media and to update the 1993 report on the Role of Telecommunications in Hate Crimes]

Resolution urging the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to conduct a comprehensive investigation on hate speech in the media, allowing public participation via public hearings, and to update the 1993 report on the Role of Telecommunications in Hate Crimes, including public participation via public hearings.

WHEREAS, Hate speech has been defined as bigoted speech attacking or disparaging a social or ethnic group or a member of such a group (American Heritage Dictionary), and hate speech is intended to offend a person of a particular group or group of people based on a group identity; and

WHEREAS, Hate speech takes various forms, from words advocating violence to those creating a climate of hate towards vulnerable groups; and

WHEREAS, Hate speech creates an environment of hate and prejudice that legitimizes violence against those individuals and groups targeted by hate speech; and

WHEREAS, Hate speech contributes to and may result in physical violence, and emotional and psychological distress to those targeted by hate speech; and

WHEREAS, Many groups have suffered harm at the hands of hate speech, including without limitation: African Americans, Asian-Pacific Americans, Latinos, Muslims, Jews, Catholics, women, Lesbians, Gays, Transgendered people, and people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Hate speech against vulnerable groups exists in our media-and is not limited to a few isolated instances or any one media platform; and

1 WHEREAS, Hate speech is often aired on large mainstream media corporations
2 including national cable news networks, television broadcasts, radio broadcasts, and on the
3 Internet; and

4 WHEREAS, The media has the power to influence people's behavior and perceptions
5 and according to the National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC), a correlation exists between
6 an increase in hate speech in the media and an increase of hate crimes committed against
7 vulnerable groups; and

8 WHEREAS, According to the National Latino Policy & Issues Brief (by the UCLA
9 Chicano Studies Research Center), the October 2008 Federal Bureau of Investigation's
10 annual hate crime statistics reported that of the 8,999 single-bias hate crime offenses in
11 2007, two-thirds (66.5 percent) were motivated by race and ethnicity/national-origin biases, a
12 number that has remained constant since 2003, with anti-African-American bias accounting
13 for more than half of offenses motivated by race and ethnicity/national-origin, the largest
14 share of total offenses (36.4 percent); and

15 WHEREAS, According to several reports (the National Latino Policy & Issues Brief by
16 the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center and the National Hispanic Media Coalition), a
17 change in offenses motivated by ethnicity/national-origin bias on anti-Hispanic bias has risen
18 steadily, from 42.8 percent in 2003 to 61.7 percent in 2007 (FBI 2008), largely linked to the
19 media's negative coverage of Latinos and the immigration debate; and

20 WHEREAS, According to the National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC), an increase
21 of hate speech in the media targeting Latinos has led to an increase of hate crimes against
22 Latinos; and

23 WHEREAS, An investigation on hate speech in the media has the potential of serving
24 the highest interests of free speech and the First Amendment; and
25

1 WHEREAS, The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has a long history of
2 examining how licensees use their public trust to serve the most vulnerable segments of
3 society, and some of these lengthy studies have included looking at the impact on children of
4 certain advertising practices, the impact of violent programming on children, and the link
5 between advertising and childhood obesity; and

6 WHEREAS, Past inquiries, studies and explorations have been done in a manner that
7 is consistent with our tradition of free speech and conducting an investigation on hate speech
8 in the media actually has the potential of serving the highest interests of free speech and First
9 Amendment protection; and

10 WHEREAS, In 1992 Congress directed the National Telecommunications and
11 Information Administration (NTIA) to examine the role of telecommunications in crimes of
12 hate and violent acts against ethnic, religious, and racial minorities, resulting in findings being
13 reported to Congress, in a 1993 report entitled *The Role of Telecommunications in Hate*
14 *Crimes*; and

15 WHEREAS, No updates to *The Role of Telecommunications in Hate Crimes* report in
16 1993 has been made; and

17 WHEREAS, Given the evolution and growth of telecommunications since the 1990's,
18 we are in dire need of an update to this 1993 report; and

19 WHEREAS, The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulates airwaves in
20 the United States, but in order to make necessary determinations regarding allocation, the
21 FCC turns to the National Telecommunications Information Administration (NTIA), which has
22 served as the President's principal advisor on telecommunication policies since 1978; now,
23 therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco
25 urges the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to conduct a comprehensive

1 investigation on hate speech in the media, and to update the 1993 report on the *Role of*
2 *Telecommunications in Hate Crimes*; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the investigation on hate speech should be conducted in
4 a transparent manner, including public participation via public hearings; and, be it

5 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San
6 Francisco urges the FCC's investigation to include the inquiry into the extent and nature of
7 hate speech in the media, the examination of the effects and impact of hate speech, and the
8 relationship between hate speech in the media and hate crimes; and, be it

9 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San
10 Francisco urges the FCC to also explore options for counteracting or reducing the negative
11 effects of hate speech in the media.



City and County of San Francisco

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San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

Tails Resolution

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Date Passed:

Resolution urging the Federal Communications Commission to conduct a comprehensive investigation on hate speech in the media, allowing public participation via public hearings, and to update the 1993 report on the Role of Telecommunications in Hate Crimes, including public participation via public hearings.

August 11, 2009 Board of Supervisors — ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Alioto-Pier, Avalos, Campos, Chiu, Chu, Daly, Dufty, Elsbernd, Mar, Maxwell, Mirkarimi

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I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on August 11, 2009 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

8/20/2009

Date Approved

Mayor Gavin Newsom