

1 [Urging the Recreation and Park Commission to Remove the Name of Julius Kahn from the
2 Playground at West Pacific Avenue and Spruce Street]

3 **Resolution urging the Recreation and Park Commission to remove the name of Julius**
4 **Kahn from the playground located at West Pacific Avenue and Spruce Street; and to**
5 **rename the playground to recognize the value of immigrants and multicultural diversity**
6 **to the City of San Francisco.**

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8 WHEREAS, In 1926, the playground at West Pacific Avenue and Spruce Street in the
9 Presidio was named after former Congressman Julius Kahn, who represented San Francisco
10 in the House of Representatives from 1899 to 1903, and from 1905 to 1924; and

11 WHEREAS, In 1902, Julius Kahn drafted and introduced United States House of
12 Representatives Bill 13031, dubbed “the Kahn bill,” which made permanent the Chinese
13 Exclusion Act; and

14 WHEREAS, The Chinese Exclusion Act, originally signed into law in 1882, extended
15 in 1892 and made permanent in 1902, excluded Chinese laborers from entering the United
16 States, making it the first time in the country’s history that a specific ethnic group was barred
17 from entry; and

18 WHEREAS, The Chinese Exclusion Act also required Chinese people who were
19 already in the United States to obtain certifications to re-enter the U.S. if they left, prohibited
20 state and federal courts from granting Chinese persons citizenship, and required that each
21 Chinese resident register and obtain a certificate of residence or else face deportation; and

22 WHEREAS, On the floor of the House of Representatives, Julius Kahn stated that
23 Chinese people were “morally the most debased people on the face of the earth,” that they
24 “resorted . . . to trickery and duplicity to circumvent our laws,” that “their daily intercourse with
25 the Caucasian has not materially changed their customs or habits,” that “gambling and

1 sensuality are the great vices of the Chinese . . . while murderous assaults, robberies,
2 kidnapping, and blackmail are a frequent occurrence;” and

3 WHEREAS, Beyond Chinese exclusion, Julius Kahn pursued efforts to exclude other
4 Asians from entry into the United States; and

5 WHEREAS, Julius Kahn declared at a speech in 1906, mere months before the United
6 States and Japan entered into the 1907 Gentlemen’s Agreement, which effectively barred
7 Japanese laborers from entering the U.S., “[W]e want the Japanese coolie kept out of our
8 State. . . . I voice the unanimous sentiment of people of the Pacific Coast when I say that they
9 do not want our naturalization law extended to the Japanese. The people of the Pacific Coast
10 feel satisfied that he will always remain loyal to the Mikado, and that the oath of naturalization
11 would be to him but a hollow mockery, an empty formality, signifying nothing;” and

12 WHEREAS, In 1910, Congressman Kahn sent a letter to the Commissioner General of
13 Immigration, Daniel Keefe, writing of immigrants from India, "It must be remembered . . . that
14 they come from a tropical country and from what I hear they cannot stand the rigors of a
15 northern climate and on that account are bound to become burdens upon the communities to
16 which they go;” and

17 WHEREAS, Julius Kahn expressed disdain toward Filipinos on the House floor in 1902,
18 “There are probably 200,000 Chinese of the full blood in the Philippine Island. Those of mixed
19 blood are many times more numerous, and it has invariably been asserted that these latter
20 are a much more dangerous element, because they combine in themselves nearly all the
21 vices of the Chinese and the Malays, with practically none of the virtues of either race;” and

22 WHEREAS, The Chinese Exclusion Act and other exclusionary policies had a harmful
23 and dehumanizing effect on immigrants, their families and their communities, the
24 repercussions of which are still felt to this day; and

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1 WHEREAS, Julius Kahn promoted and institutionalized racist and exclusionary policies
2 in the United States on behalf of San Francisco; and

3 WHEREAS, Our parks, which are a space for everyone in our diverse community,
4 should not bear names of hatred or exclusion; and

5 WHEREAS, There is broad community support for the removal of Julius Kahn from the
6 name of the playground; now, therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco urges the Recreation and
8 Park Commission to remove Julius Kahn from the name of “Julius Kahn Playground;” and,
9 be it

10 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Recreation and
11 Parks Commission to remove the name of Julius Kahn from the park after conducting a
12 thorough community naming process; and, be it

13 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the playground be renamed to recognize the multicultural
14 diversity and value of immigrants to the City and County of San Francisco.

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