

1 [Urging the City and County of San Francisco to Commit Resources Towards Addressing the
2 Needs of the Rising Number of Unaccompanied Minors Fleeing from Central America]

3 **Resolution urging the City and County of San Francisco to commit resources towards**
4 **addressing the needs of the rising number of unaccompanied minors fleeing from**
5 **Central America to mitigate the mounting international humanitarian crisis.**

6
7 WHEREAS, In recent months an unprecedented number of children have fled their
8 home countries in Central America to seek refuge in the United States; and

9 WHEREAS, Data collected by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) shows that
10 since October 2013, approximately 47,017 Central American children have fled from their
11 home countries into the United States, which represents a substantial increase from prior
12 years; and

13 WHEREAS, It is estimated that the number of children entering the United States in
14 FY2014 will exceed 60,000, with an average of 120-400 children crossing the border each
15 day; and

16 WHEREAS, More girls are migrating than in previous years because of regional
17 increases in gender-based violence; and

18 WHEREAS, During their dangerous journey to the United States, many children
19 become victims of trafficking, sexual abuse and violence; and

20 WHEREAS, The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
21 interviewed more than 400 unaccompanied minors and the minors stated that extreme
22 poverty, unemployment, trauma and the lack of state protection from gang violence and drug-
23 traffickers were the main reasons for fleeing their home countries; and

24 WHEREAS, According to the UNHCR, approximately two-thirds of the minors who
25 have recently arrived qualify for international protections as a result of violence and abuse in

1 their home countries; and

2 WHEREAS, Once apprehended by the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, many of these
3 children have been placed in detention facilities and processing centers where they have
4 been subjected to inhumane living conditions for indeterminate periods of time; and

5 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Health and Human Service’s (HHS)
6 Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), the agency responsible for the care and well-being of
7 unaccompanied immigrant children, has identified the need for children to receive culturally
8 competent and trauma-informed medical and social work services for life-skills readiness and
9 to ease their social integration process; additionally, ORR cited the need for legal services to
10 ensure that every child has access to counsel and receives due process; and

11 WHEREAS, The federal foster care program, which is designed to place
12 unaccompanied children who cannot be reunified with their family members with foster
13 families, is unable to meet the growing demand for host families; and

14 WHEREAS, The Obama Administration and HSS are soliciting the assistance of major
15 cities, including San Francisco, to leverage city resources to help address this escalating
16 international humanitarian crisis; and

17 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Bay Area is home to a large and vibrant Central
18 American community and has a longstanding history of supporting the advancement of human
19 rights throughout Central America, evidenced by the important role it played during the
20 Sanctuary Movement of the 1980’s when San Francisco provided a safe-haven for Central
21 American refugees fleeing civil conflict; and

22 WHEREAS, Since the passage of the Sanctuary Ordinance in 1989, San Francisco
23 has held the distinction of being a “Sanctuary City” providing equal access to public services
24 and civil protections without regard to an individual’s immigration status; and

25

1 WHEREAS, San Francisco benefits from a rich network of culturally competent
2 organizations and service providers with expertise in addressing the needs of Central
3 American and Latino immigrant communities, including the Central American Resource
4 Center (CARECEN), Instituto Familiar de la Raza, Legal Services for Children and the
5 broader San Francisco Immigrant Legal and Education Network (SFILLEN); now, therefore, be
6 it

7 RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco assist in the humanitarian
8 relief effort by dedicating resources towards addressing the short and long term needs of
9 unaccompanied immigrant children entering the San Francisco Bay Area by:

- 10 a) Promoting the need for host families and sponsors who can provide safe and stable
11 housing opportunities for the unaccompanied children and work to move children from
12 the shelters into homes of relatives or host families as soon as possible; and
13 b) Identify city resources to ensure that City Departments, in partnership with non-profit
14 organizations, can offer a continuum of culturally competent relief services to meet the
15 medical, mental health, educational and legal needs of these children and their
16 families; and, be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco urges our United
18 States Congressional delegation to ensure the humane treatment of the thousands of minors
19 being detained and to extend the necessary level of protections including humanitarian relief,
20 advocacy, legal support and expeditious reunification of minors with their families; and, be it

21 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby directs
22 the Clerk of the Board to send a copy of this Resolution to the Honorable Dianne Feinstein,
23 United States Senate, the Honorable Barbara Boxer, United States Senate, the Honorable
24 Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives and the Honorable Jackie
25 Speier, U.S. House of Representatives.