

1 [Affirming the Importance of Independent Civilian Oversight of the San Francisco Police  
2 Commission]

3 **Resolution affirming the importance of keeping the independent civilian oversight of**  
4 **the San Francisco Police Commission.**

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6 WHEREAS, In November 2024, San Francisco voters adopted Proposition E, directing  
7 the creation of a body to evaluate the City’s boards and commissions and recommend  
8 structural reforms intended to improve coordination and governmental efficiency; and

9 WHEREAS, The Streamlining Task Force was convened to assess more than one  
10 hundred fifty advisory and decision-making entities and propose consolidation, modification,  
11 or elimination where appropriate; and

12 WHEREAS, The Task Force’s final report includes recommendations that would  
13 significantly alter the governance structure of the San Francisco Police Commission; and

14 WHEREAS, Among the proposed changes are transferring exclusive authority to  
15 appoint and remove the Chief of Police to the Mayor, relocating primary disciplinary authority  
16 over sworn officers to the Chief, allowing removal of commissioners by elected officials, and  
17 limiting the Commission’s role in confirming mayoral appointments; and

18 WHEREAS, Concentrating authority over leadership and discipline within a single  
19 executive office would fundamentally change the current model of shared governance and  
20 civilian review; and

21 WHEREAS, Independent civilian oversight in San Francisco has often been  
22 strengthened in response to critical incidents involving loss of life caused by law enforcement  
23 and community demands for accountability; and

24 WHEREAS, On March 21, 2014, Alex Nieto, a 28-year-old security guard and City  
25 College student, was eating a burrito in Bernal Heights Park while carrying a licensed Taser

1 when police officers responded to a 911 call reporting a man with a gun; officers fired multiple  
2 shots, killing Mr. Nieto, and the incident prompted public debate about threat assessment,  
3 racial bias, and whether de-escalation alternatives were sufficiently pursued; and

4 WHEREAS, On February 26, 2015, Amilcar Perez-Lopez, a 20-year-old immigrant from  
5 Guatemala, was shot by San Francisco police officers in the Mission District after officers  
6 reported that he displayed a knife; community members raised concerns regarding language  
7 barriers, mental health considerations, and transparency in the investigative process, leading  
8 to demonstrations and calls for improved oversight; and

9 WHEREAS, On December 2, 2015, Mario Woods was shot by San Francisco police  
10 officers in the Bayview District following a report that he had allegedly stabbed a person and  
11 was armed with a knife; cell phone video of the encounter showed multiple officers firing at  
12 Mr. Woods as he stood near a light pole, and the footage fueled widespread public protests, a  
13 hunger strike at City Hall, and federal review of San Francisco Police Department (SFPD)  
14 policies; and

15 WHEREAS, On April 7, 2016, Luis Gongora Pat, a 45-year-old homeless man, was  
16 shot and killed in the Mission District after officers responded to a report of a man armed with  
17 a knife; the shooting intensified community concern regarding interactions between police and  
18 unhoused residents and the adequacy of de-escalation efforts; and

19 WHEREAS, These San Francisco incidents collectively contributed to substantial  
20 reforms, including strengthened de-escalation standards, revised use-of-force policies  
21 emphasizing proportionality and necessity, expanded crisis intervention training, and  
22 enhanced transparency requirements adopted under the authority of civilian oversight bodies;  
23 and

24 WHEREAS, On May 25, 2020, George Floyd died after a Minneapolis police officer  
25 knelt on his neck for more than nine minutes during an arrest for an alleged counterfeit bill, an

1 event captured on video and widely disseminated, prompting global protests and renewed  
2 scrutiny of police accountability structures across the United States; and

3 WHEREAS, On March 13, 2020, Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old emergency medical  
4 technician, was fatally shot during the execution of a late-night search warrant at her  
5 Louisville, Kentucky apartment; Ms. Taylor was not the primary target of the underlying  
6 narcotics investigation, and the circumstances surrounding the warrant’s execution intensified  
7 national concern regarding no-knock entries, proportional use of force, and the need for  
8 independent review of officer-involved shootings; and

9 WHEREAS, On January 7, 2023, Tyre Nichols died after a violent encounter with  
10 Memphis police officers during a traffic stop; video footage released by authorities led to  
11 nationwide demonstrations and reinforced calls for stronger accountability systems and  
12 independent review of officer misconduct; and

13 WHEREAS, Nationally recognized principles of effective civilian police oversight  
14 emphasize independence, transparency, accessibility to the public, and insulation from  
15 political interference as essential components of credible accountability systems; and

16 WHEREAS, The Police Commission has, over many years, exercised independent  
17 oversight authority granted by the voters, including the adoption of forward-looking policies on  
18 de-escalation, use-of-force standards, body-worn camera implementation, and other  
19 accountability reforms that have influenced policing practices beyond San Francisco; and

20 WHEREAS, Broad concern has been expressed by community members, legal  
21 advocates, labor representatives, and former public officials that the proposed restructuring  
22 could diminish transparency, weaken checks and balances, and reduce public confidence in  
23 disciplinary processes; and

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1           WHEREAS, Government efficiency, while important, must not come at the expense of  
2 public trust, constitutional safeguards, or community participation in matters of public safety;  
3 now, therefore, be it

4           RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors affirms the importance of maintaining a  
5 structurally independent Police Commission with meaningful authority over policy, leadership  
6 oversight, and disciplinary review; and, be it

7           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors opposes any  
8 proposal that would substantially curtail the Police Commission’s autonomy or transfer its core  
9 oversight functions in a manner that undermines civilian accountability; and, be it

10          FURTHER RESOLVED, That any reform affecting police governance shall proceed  
11 only through a transparent public process that includes expert consultation, stakeholder  
12 engagement, and full consideration of the long-term implications for community trust and  
13 public safety.

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