

1 [Anti-Arab and Anti-Muslim Bus Advertisements]

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3 **Resolution standing with Muslim and Arab communities in the face of anti-Arab and**
4 **anti-Muslim bus advertisements.**

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6 WHEREAS, San Franciscans have come from around the world, and at its core, the
7 City and County of San Francisco celebrates diversity, stands for acceptance, and has fought
8 bigotry and racism; and

9 WHEREAS, San Francisco has many Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian
10 (AMEMSA) residents; and

11 WHEREAS, Members of AMEMSA communities have been subjected to pervasive
12 discrimination and hate crimes in the aftermath of the tragic events of September 11, 2001;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, A group calling itself the American Freedom Defense Initiative (AFDI) has
15 been submitting advertisements on buses across the country that specifically target members
16 of the Muslim and Arab communities; and

17 WHEREAS, AFDI's newest advertisements, which denigrate Muslims and Arabs and
18 which have no redeeming social value, have begun publication on San Francisco Muni buses
19 on March 10, 2013; and

20 WHEREAS, AFDI was co-founded by Pamela Geller, who has been designated by the
21 Southern Law Poverty Center as an anti-Muslim hate extremist; and

22 WHEREAS, AFDI submitted an offensive, bigoted bus advertisement to the New York
23 Municipal Transportation Authority (NYMTA) that referred to Muslims and Arabs as savages
24 (Savage Advertisement); the NYMTA rejected the Savage Advertisement, a decision reversed
25 by a federal court who ordered that the Savage Advertisement be displayed based on the

1 First Amendment; the Savage Advertisement was also submitted to Washington D.C., where
2 a court also directed Washington D.C. to run the Savage Advertisement pursuant to the First
3 Amendment; and

4 WHEREAS, The Savage Advertisement was also submitted to the San Francisco
5 Municipal Transit Authority (SFMTA) in August of 2012; the SFMTA put up the Savage
6 Advertisement after the NY federal court decision; 75 organizations and 35 community
7 leaders representing diverse communities and civil rights, labor and social justice
8 organizations submitted a letter to the SFMTA requesting that it work with AMENSA
9 communities to condemn the Savage Advertisement; the SFMTA Director and the Chair
10 issued condemnations and issued a disclaimer next to the Savage Advertisement stating:
11 “Muni condemns statements that describe any group as savages;” SFMTA donated the
12 proceeds of the Savage Advertisement to the San Francisco Human Rights Commission
13 (SFHRC) to use to address the harm from the Savage Advertisement; and

14 WHEREAS, In and around the time period that the Savage Advertisement ran on San
15 Francisco buses, a mosque in Ontario, California found the limbs of a dismembered pig on the
16 building's front steps during the holy month of Ramadan; a group of young people were
17 arrested after throwing lemons at Muslims worshipping at a mosque in Hayward, California; a
18 man in Morton Grove, Illinois, was arrested for firing a high- velocity air rifle at a mosque; a
19 bottle filled with acid was hurled at an Islamic school during Ramadan prayers in Lombard,
20 Illinois; an arsonist burned a mosque in Joplin, Missouri to the ground; six members of the
21 Sikh community were killed when a white supremacist opened fire at their temple in Oak
22 Creek, Wisconsin; and

23 WHEREAS, In San Francisco, members of the Muslim and Arab communities were
24 deeply harmed by the Savage Advertisement, as discussed in a community forum on January
25 31, 2013, with city leadership in attendance; at the forum, community members showed how

1 the advertisement is part of a pervasive environment of bullying and discrimination directed at
2 the Muslim and Arab communities; Arab and Muslim Muni drivers spoke about the
3 tremendous insult that came from having to drive buses disparaging them as “savages;” Arab
4 and Muslim youth spoke about being bullied at school and about the ways having to ride
5 buses to school calling them “savages” was very harmful to their development as individuals;
6 and members from other communities, including the African-American, Asian-American,
7 Latino, LGBT and Jewish communities, spoke in solidarity with AMEMSA communities in
8 condemnation of the Savage Advertisement; and

9 WHEREAS, Members of the Muslim and Arab communities have asked that proceeds
10 from the Savage Advertisement be used to address the systemic Islamophobic and racist
11 issues facing the communities by funding a discrimination impact study that would research
12 and develop a report concerning the impact of post-9/11 discrimination on members of the
13 Muslim and Arab communities; now therefore, be it

14 RESOLVED, The Board of Supervisors stands with its AMEMSA communities in the
15 condemnation of the Islamophobic and racist advertisements as well as the use of any
16 language that marginalizes communities because of race, religion or ethnicity or that has the
17 effect of legitimizing violence against them, and also states that while advertisements may
18 have First Amendment protections, they have no value in facilitating constructive dialogue and
19 are contrary to the values of diversity and inclusion that San Francisco prides itself on; and

20 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors ask SFMTA and SFHRC to
21 direct that the proceeds of the Islamophobic and racist advertisements be used to fund a
22 discrimination impact study of the impact of discrimination and hate on the Arab and Muslim
23 communities post-9/11; and

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1 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors encourages fellow community
2 leaders and residents to speak out against these advertisements and stand in solidarity with
3 members of the Muslim and Arab communities against the hate being directed at them.

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