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May 5, 2020

San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
San Francisco City Hall, Room 244  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102

**Subject: Emergency Ordinance – Restroom and Hand Washing Facilities for Unsheltered People—SUPPORT (File Number 200373)**

Dear Honorable Supervisors:

On behalf of GLIDE, I am writing to urge you to support Supervisor Matt Haney’s emergency ordinance to help limit the spread of COVID-19 by requiring the City to provide, staff, and maintain restrooms equipped with toilets and hand washing facilities, at a ratio of one restroom per 50 unsheltered people. This emergency ordinance is necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by enhancing the ability of people experiencing homelessness to comply with social distancing protocols, particularly the ability to maintain personal hygiene and to frequently and thoroughly wash their hands as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

GLIDE is a leading social service provider, located in San Francisco’s Tenderloin neighborhood, dedicated to strengthening communities and transforming lives. In this quickly evolving public health emergency, GLIDE is particularly concerned about COVID-19’s disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable residents of our city, including and especially those forced to live unhoused on our streets. GLIDE is committed to maintaining essential services to those in need, while also working with partners across the city to ensure that San Francisco safeguards the health and wellbeing of all San Franciscans.

On February 25, 2020, Mayor London Breed proclaimed a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and on March 3, 2020, the Board of Supervisors concurred. The County Health Officer subsequently issued guidance to San Franciscans, which include that people frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer that is recognized by the CDC as effective in combatting COVID-19.

Although the order from the County Health Officer requires governmental agencies to “take appropriate steps to help ensure compliance with social distancing requirements, including adequate provision of hand sanitizer,” it does not go so far as to mandate the provision of bathrooms and handwashing stations. Meanwhile, CDC guidance specifically provides that one method of preventing the spread of COVID-19 among those who are unsheltered is to “[e]nsure nearby restroom facilities have functional water taps, are stocked with hand hygiene materials (soap, drying materials) and bath tissue, and remain open to people

experiencing homelessness 24 hours per day. If toilets or handwashing facilities are not available nearby, provide access to portable latrines with handwashing facilities for encampments of more than 10 people.”

Given the spread of COVID-19, individuals without homes should have the opportunity to comply with social distancing requirements, including access to toilets and hand washing, to the greatest extent possible. However, San Francisco’s unsheltered residents experiencing homelessness currently have no realistic way to comply with social distancing and personal hygiene protocols when living in encampments or on the street. The lack of adequate hygiene facilities poses a severe and imminent threat to the health, safety, and well-being of themselves and others. Communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, have the potential to spread quickly through the homeless community. As such, it is especially important that unsheltered individuals have access to free, public restrooms with hand washing facilities.

To meet the needs of San Francisco’s approximately 5,180 unsheltered individuals at a ratio one restroom for 50 unsheltered persons, the City needs approximately 65 additional restrooms. Having a sufficient number of restrooms equipped with hand washing facilities will allow people to maintain proper personal hygiene and to frequently and thoroughly wash their hands, and will help slow community spread of COVID19.

For these reasons and more, please support Supervisor Haney’s ordinance to provide restroom and handwashing facilities for unsheltered people. If you have any questions, you may contact me at [wsaver@glide.org](mailto:wsaver@glide.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wesley Saver', written in a cursive style.

Wesley Saver  
Policy Manager, GLIDE

Cc: Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors via [angela.calvillo@sfgov.org](mailto:angela.calvillo@sfgov.org)