

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

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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 relocate primary disciplinary authority over sworn officers to the Chief, while having  
14 Commission serve as an appellate body that hears appeals, and grant the Commission hiring  
15 and firing authority over the Director of the Department of Police Accountability; and

16 WHEREAS, Shifting authority over leadership and discipline within a single executive  
17 office would fundamentally change the current model of public oversight and civilian review;  
18 and

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

22 WHEREAS, On March 21, 2014, Alex Nieto, a 28-year-old security guard and City  
23 College student, was eating a burrito in Bernal Heights Park while carrying a licensed Taser  
24 when police officers responded to a 911 call reporting a man with a gun; officers fired multiple  
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1 shots, killing Mr. Nieto, and the incident prompted public debate about threat assessment,  
2 racial bias, and whether de-escalation alternatives were sufficiently pursued; and

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

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

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

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

23 WHEREAS, On May 25, 2020, George Floyd died after a Minneapolis police officer  
24 knelt on his neck for more than nine minutes during an arrest for an alleged counterfeit bill, an  
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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 changes to disciplinary  
22 authority and process could diminish transparency, weaken checks and balances, and reduce  
23 public confidence in 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 disciplinary oversight  
6 and review; and, be it

7           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors opposes any  
8 proposal that would substantially transfer the Police Commission's core oversight functions in  
9 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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