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October 17, 2023

San Francisco Board of Supervisors

The Honorable Aaron Peskin, Board President
The Honorable Connie Chan, Supervisor, District 1
The Honorable Catherine Stefani, Supervisor, District 2
The Honorable Joel Engardio, Supervisor, District 4
The Honorable Dean Preston, Supervisor, District 5
The Honorable Matt Dorsey, Supervisor, District 6
The Honorable Myrna Melgar, Supervisor, District 7
The Honorable Rafael Mandelman, Supervisor, District 8
The Honorable Hillary Ronen, Supervisor, District 9
The Honorable Ahsha Safai, Supervisor, District 11
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Agenda Item #46, Board File 231020: **Opposition to Amending the Rules of Order — Limiting Remote Public Comment Opportunities**

Dear Board President Peskin, and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

This is expressly **NOT** to be misconstrued a *quid pro quo* threat. Instead it's a simple statement of my intent. A promise of simple math.

To the extent the Motion to eliminate remote public comment passes by the Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, October 17 depriving non-disabled San Franciscans from being able to utilize remote call-in public comment, and making in more cumbersome on disabled citizens, I will have to seriously consider stopping making more political campaign contributions for the foreseeable future. You take away my and our rights. I'll take away making campaign contributions. After all, I'm sure my heirs might prefer that when I die I leave them a higher balance in my checking account. Here's a recap of my campaign donations since the 2019 – 2022 election cycles:

Patrick Monette-Shaw Political Campaign Contributions

Election Cycle	Candidate	Amount	Running Total
2020	Joe Biden 2020 Victory Fund (U.S. President)	\$ 200	
2019 – 2020	Mayor Pete for U.S. President	\$ 725	
U.S. President Contributions		\$ 925	\$ 925
2019 – 2020	Jaime Harrison for U.S. Senate	\$ 2,000	
2020 – 2022	Reverend Raphael Warnock for U.S. Senate	\$ 750	
2020 – 2022	Mandela Barnes (Wisconsin) for U.S. Senate	\$ 750	
2019 – 2020	Amy McGrath for U.S. Senate	\$ 2,600	
2022	Katie Porter for U.S. Senate	\$ 1,000	
U.S. Senate Contributions		\$ 7,100	\$ 7,100
2020	Katie Porter for U.S. Congress 2020	\$ 1,000	
2022	Katie Porter for U.S. Congress	\$ 1,500	
2022	Adam Schiff for Congress 2022	\$ 500	
2020	Eric Swalwell for Congress — 2020	\$ 200	
2022	Eric Swalwell for Congress — 2022	\$ 500	
U.S. Congress Contributions		\$ 3,700	\$ 3,700
2021 – 2022	David Campos for Assembly	\$ 1,000	
California Assembly Contributions		\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
2019 – 2020	Dean Preston for Supervisor 2019	\$ 200	
2020	John Avalos for Supervisor 2020	\$ 251	
2020	Aaron Peskin for Supervisor 2020	\$ 251	
2022	Gordon Mar for Board of Supes 2022	\$ 500	
2023	Connie Chan for Board of Supes 2024	\$ 100	
San Francisco Board of Supervisors Contributions		\$ 1,302	\$ 1,302
Total:			\$ 14,027

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As a retiree on a limited income, I felt compelled to participate in our Democracy, knowing I'm fortunate to be able to afford making campaign donations.

But if this Board of Supervisors prefers to gut our Democracy and restrict my and others' ability to participate in it without having to go through the hassle of seeking and obtaining "*reasonable accommodation*" as a disabled person to participate remotely in our Democracy, then I have to conclude you really aren't interested in what we have to say, you're only interested in our campaign contributions. So why then should I be interested in making campaign donations in the face of your hubris?

That includes Joe Biden's reelection campaign, and Katie Porter's run for the U.S. Senate, along with upcoming Board of Supervisor elections.

I may just go to my "Plan B."

The Board already has the ability to cut off the microphone of public speakers attending in person. And there's already a substantial built-in delay broadcasting meetings on SFGOV-TV and over Web-ex.

A total of 34 remote public speakers offered public comments by phone during the Rules Committee rushed hearing on Monday, October 16 regarding Supervisor Peskin's Motion before you on Tuesday. All 34 spoke eloquently opposing the Motion to eliminate remote public comment — however temporarily. Not one speaker today supported eliminating remote public comment was justified to curb hate speech.

Supervisor Peskin's Motion before you today to now eliminate taking remote public comment at Board of Supervisors meetings flies in the face of the recommendations Ms. Jennifer Johnston developed back in February when the Board of Supervisors agreed to adopt. Peskin's Motion before you today was introduced on September 26, 2023 and here we are three weeks later with his Motion being rushed through the Rules Committee without any substantial time for members of the public to weigh in on the wisdom of eliminating remote public comment. The claim \$10 million is needed for broadcast delay is nuts.

San Francisco voters have NOT ceded to the Board of Supervisors the authority to so restrict our public voices at your whim, or your annoyance with serial public comment violators, or at your pleasure. That's NOT why we elected you, and we retain the right to provide public comment on what our City government is doing on our behalf.

Importantly, Peskin's proposed Motion does NOT describe how members of the public are to go about requesting to use remote public comment, and there are no details on how far in advance a member of the public would have to place such a request for a reasonable accommodation, particularly given that the San Francisco's Sunshine Ordinance requires policy bodies to post their meeting agendas only 72 hours in advance.

How would a member of the public even be able to request and secure special "*reasonable accommodation*" permission and approval within a 72-hour period, particularly over a weekend?

This Motion would essentially rob all San Franciscans of their ability to provide remote public comment and force us into attending Board meetings in person — a daunting two- to three-hour jaunt to City Hall just to gain a paltry one- or two-minute opportunity to speak at a microphone, in person. Whether for disabled people, or able-bodied citizens, this poses an excessive time burden in order to participate in our experiment in Democracy!

The full Board of Supervisors need to reject the Recommendation rushed through the Rules Committee today. You should reject Peskin's anti-democratic mealy-mouthed "fix" by rejecting it completely.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Monette-Shaw

Columnist,

Westside Observer Newspaper

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cc: Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board

Alisa Somera, Legislative Deputy Director to the Clerk of the Board