

File No. 250935

Committee Item No. _____

Board Item No. 32

COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Committee: _____

Date: _____

Board of Supervisors Meeting

Date: September 16, 2025

Cmte Board

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OTHER

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Prepared by: Lisa Lew

Date: September 12, 2025

Prepared by: _____

Date: _____

1 [Urging Governor Newsom to Commute All Death Sentences in California]

2
3 **Resolution urging Governor Gavin Newsom to use his executive powers to commute**
4 **the death sentences for all individuals currently sentenced to death in California.**

5
6 WHEREAS, There are currently 565 individuals sentenced to death in California.
7 California has the largest death row in the nation and one of the largest death rows in the
8 world; and

9 WHEREAS, San Francisco County has no individuals sentenced to death and the
10 voters of San Francisco have twice voted to repeal the death penalty in 2012 and 2016; and

11 WHEREAS, The death penalty reflects a legacy of racial discrimination; Sixty-nine
12 percent of the people under a sentence of death in California are people of color, and one-
13 third are Black; and

14 WHEREAS, Death sentences are more likely to be imposed in California when the
15 victims are white than when they are Black or Latino, while the majority of homicides with
16 Black or Latino victims go unsolved; and

17 WHEREAS, The California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation
18 recommended abolishing the death penalty as a step to addressing the legacy of slavery in
19 California; and

20 WHEREAS, Almost half of the people on California's death row are there for crimes
21 they committed as youth under the age of 26, and approximately one in six were under 21
22 years old; and

23 WHEREAS, Recognizing that young people's brains are not fully developed until their
24 mid 20s, California has enacted several reforms to address the diminished culpability of
25

1 youthful offenders and individuals on death row and those serving life without parole are
2 excluded from these policies; and

3 WHEREAS, More than one third of people on death row in California have been
4 diagnosed with a serious mental illness and dozens have been diagnosed with intellectual
5 disabilities; and

6 WHEREAS, A study by the National Academy of Sciences estimates that at least four
7 percent of people sentenced to death in the U.S. are innocent and California has already
8 exonerated eight men from death row due to wrongful conviction, all of them people of color;
9 and

10 WHEREAS, California's death penalty system has cost taxpayers \$5 billion since 1977,
11 Meanwhile funding for vital victims services are being reduced in California due to Congress's
12 drastic cuts to funding for the Victims of Crime Act; and

13 WHEREAS, Two-thirds of the individuals sentenced to death in California have been
14 there for more than 20 years, and dozens of individuals have been on death row for more than
15 40 years with literally decades of delays caused by California's inability to provide lawyers to
16 handle capital appeals; and

17 WHEREAS, The California Democratic Party Platform supports the full repeal of the
18 death penalty and the Party has twice endorsed initiatives to repeal the death penalty; and

19 WHEREAS, Under the California Constitution, the Governor of California has the power
20 to commute death sentences, with the review and concurrence of a majority of the California
21 Supreme Court justices in certain cases; and

22 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Opera will present from September 14 to 28, 2025,
23 Dead Man Walking, an opera commissioned by San Francisco Opera 25 years ago about
24 Sister Helen Prejean's spiritual journey accompanying a man on death row that informed her
25 fight to end the death penalty in the United States; now, therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors for the City and County of San Francisco
2 urges Governor Newsom to act now to commute all death sentences; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Board is hereby directed to transmit a
4 copy of this Resolution to Governor Gavin Newsom.

From: [Robin Kallman](#)
To: [BOS-Supervisors](#); [BOS-Operations](#); [BOS-Legislative Aides](#)
Subject: Please support Sup. Fielder's resolution
Date: Thursday, September 11, 2025 1:54:43 PM

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Dear SF Supervisors and staff,

I am a long-time San Francisco resident and an attorney, very recently retired from 36 years of death penalty defense work. I write to urge you all to support Supervisor Fielder's resolution calling on Governor Newsom to commute all death sentences.

The death penalty system is broken in myriad ways. One example of that is that literally hundreds of death-sentenced people in this state have been waiting 10, 15, or even 20 years for appointment of habeas corpus counsel to investigate and present any arguable claims on state habeas corpus, a proceeding to which they are entitled under California law. There is no realistic prospect of such counsel being appointed in the foreseeable future because there is no funding for such representation, which is very costly. Even if such funding were allocated, the number of attorneys qualified and willing to take these cases is small, and it would take decades to appoint counsel for all those currently unrepresented. These individuals are stuck in limbo, yet they remain sentenced to death, with the knowledge that a change in governor could mean the resumption of executions. No-one should have to live under sentence of death with no prospect of judicial review.

The prosecution of a capital case clogs up the courts at every level, slowing down justice for other litigants. The cost of putting and keeping someone on death row far exceeds the cost of keeping someone in prison for life. That money could be spent so much more profitably on other things.

Please support Supervisor Fielder's resolution and urge Governor Newsom to commute all death sentences.

Sincerely,

Robin Kallman
Attorney at Law
634A Fillmore Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

From: [Diane Lozano](#)
To: [BOS-Supervisors](#); [BOS-Operations](#); [BOS-Legislative Aides](#)
Subject: Clemency Resolution
Date: Thursday, September 11, 2025 12:05:38 PM

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Hello,

I write to urge all members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to support Supervisor Fielder's resolution calling on Governor Newsom to commute all death sentences.

I have recently moved to San Francisco and work at a small nonprofit in the Mission that fights the death penalty. I moved here from a very conservative state because I believe in the humanity of all individuals as promoted by this wonderful state and city. Please urge Governor Newsome to do the humane and civilized act of clemency!

Thank you,

Diane

Diane M. Lozano
Executive Director
Full Picture Justice
office 415-824-1424
cell 307-421-7233
diane@fullpicturejustice.org/diane@cr-i.org

From: [Zoe Marinkovich](#)
To: [BOS-Legislative Aides](#); [BOS-Operations](#); [BOS-Supervisors](#)
Subject: Resolution calling on Governor Newsom to commute all death sentences
Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 6:58:58 PM

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Hello,

I write to urge all members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to please support Supervisor Fielder's resolution calling on Governor Newsom to commute all death sentences.

Thank you,

Zoe Marinkovich

94122

From: [Michelle](#)
To: [BOS-Operations](#); [BOS-Legislative Aides](#)
Subject: support for clemency resolution
Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 5:43:09 PM

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Hello,

I am a resident of District 8 and am writing to urge all members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to please support Supervisor Fielder's resolution calling on Governor Newsom to commute all death sentences.

Thank you,

Michelle Foy

From: [Barbara Cannella](#)
To: [BOS-Operations](#)
Subject: clemency
Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 3:21:31 PM

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Hello,

I write to urge all members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to please support Supervisor Fielder's resolution calling on Governor Newsom to commute all death sentences.

I live in the 94121 zip code area of SF and am a member of Amnesty International Group 30, San Francisco branch.

Thank you,

Barbara Cannella

From: [Dawn Kwan](#)
To: [BOS-Legislative Aides](#); [BOS-Operations](#); [BOS-Supervisors](#)
Subject: Please support the new resolution on clemency
Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 2:35:08 PM

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Hi,

I live in the Presidio. I write to urge all members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to please support Supervisor Fielder's resolution calling on Governor Newsom to commute all death sentences.

Thank you,

Dawn

From: [Sasha Price](#)
To: [BOS-Supervisors](#)
Subject: Please support the new resolution on clemency
Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 1:06:44 PM

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Hello,

As a San Francisco resident and long-time Amnesty International member, I write to urge all members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to please support Supervisor Fielder's resolution calling on Governor Newsom to commute all death sentences.

Thank you,

Sasha M. Price
1263 Oak Street #1
San Francisco CA 94117

From: [Gavrilah Wells](#)
To: [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#); [BOS-Supervisors](#)
Cc: [BOS-Legislative Aides](#); [MandelmanStaff \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Please support the resolution calling on Governor Newsom to commute all death sentences
Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2025 12:33:14 PM

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Dear Supervisor Mandelman and Board of Supervisors,

I am writing to urge all of the members of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors to please support Supervisor Fielder's resolution calling on Governor Newsom to commute all death sentences.

In community,

Gavrilah Wells,
AIUSA State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator, California
811 Diamond Street Apt 4
San Francisco, CA 94114

Introduction Form

(by a Member of the Board of Supervisors or the Mayor)

I hereby submit the following item for introduction (select only one):

- ☐ 1. For reference to Committee (Ordinance, Resolution, Motion or Charter Amendment)
- ☐ 2. Request for next printed agenda (For Adoption Without Committee Reference)
(Routine, non-controversial and/or commendatory matters only)
- ☐ 3. Request for Hearing on a subject matter at Committee
- ☐ 4. Request for Letter beginning with "Supervisor inquires..."
- ☐ 5. City Attorney Request
- ☐ 6. Call File No. from Committee.
- ☐ 7. Budget and Legislative Analyst Request (attached written Motion)
- ☐ 8. Substitute Legislation File No.
- ☐ 9. Reactivate File No.
- ☐ 10. Topic submitted for Mayoral Appearance before the Board on

The proposed legislation should be forwarded to the following (please check all appropriate boxes):

- ☐ Small Business Commission ☐ Youth Commission ☐ Ethics Commission
- ☐ Planning Commission ☐ Building Inspection Commission ☐ Human Resources Department

General Plan Referral sent to the Planning Department (proposed legislation subject to Charter 4.105 & Admin 2A.53):

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

(Note: For Imperative Agenda items (a Resolution not on the printed agenda), use the Imperative Agenda Form.)

Sponsor(s):

Subject:

Long Title or text listed:

Signature of Sponsoring Supervisor: