

1 [Urging the Full Pardon of Salesh Prasad]

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3 **Resolution urging the Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor of California, to grant**
4 **Salesh Prasad, a full pardon to allow him to remain in the United States with his**
5 **family and to continue contributing to his community.**

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7 WHEREAS, The history of the City and County of San Francisco includes welcoming
8 people of diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and national backgrounds. Immigrants are an
9 integral part of our city and have made enormous positive contributions to San Francisco,
10 where all families are valued; and

11 WHEREAS, Salesh (“Sal”) Prasad is an immigrant from Fiji who has lived in
12 California since he was 6 years old and came to the United States as a Lawful Permanent
13 Resident with his family; and

14 WHEREAS, During his childhood, Mr. Prasad experienced domestic violence within
15 his household and was sexually abused by an adult male acquaintance; and

16 WHEREAS, This abuse pushed Mr. Prasad to seek protection from gang members
17 and to self-medicate with drugs and alcohol, causing his life to enter a downward spiral;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, At age 22, Mr. Prasad took a person’s life during an altercation, for
20 which he is incredibly remorseful; and

21 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad was convicted for that crime and was sentenced to 20 years
22 to life in state prison with the possibility of parole; and

23 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad was granted parole by the California Board of Parole
24 Hearings in 2021, after serving about twenty-seven years of incarceration; and

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1 WHEREAS, Those granted parole by the Board of Parole Hearings following an
2 indeterminate life sentence represent a very low recidivism rate as evidenced by the 2019
3 Recidivism Report for Offenders Released from the California Department of Corrections
4 and Rehabilitation, finding that less than one percent were convicted of felony crimes
5 against persons after release; and

6 WHEREAS, Despite the challenging circumstances, Mr. Prasad began to heal and
7 engage in self-inquiry focused on rehabilitation and change while incarcerated; and

8 WHEREAS, Through many years of therapy, Mr. Prasad healed from his abuse,
9 transitioning from victim to survivor; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad has reflected on the harm that he caused and the incredible
11 remorse he holds for his actions; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad became a leader not just in prison and ICE detention but in
13 the broader Bay Area community. He strives to help other California immigrants and
14 incarcerated people in order to fulfill his goal in life to help people rather than hurt them;
15 and

16 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad had no rule violations in prison for 13 years prior to his
17 hearing with the Parole Board in 2021, and has had no disciplinary violations whatsoever in
18 ICE detention; and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad's leadership inside the facility goes beyond his support for
20 other individuals detained, he has also spoken out about work conditions and safety to
21 CalOSHA; and

22 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad fought to protect Californian families from the COVID-19
23 pandemic by encouraging his peers to connect with California Collaborative for Immigrant
24 Justice's Vaccine Education & Empowerment in Detention program. He helped other
25 inmates get their vaccines and boosters; and

1 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad also spoke in support of the VISION Act, which will prevent
2 unnecessary transfers to ICE detention centers in California; and

3 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad improved conditions for other inmates and strengthened the
4 human rights of all Californians by sharing his own experience with solitary confinement.
5 Mr. Prasad continues to fight for the California Mandela Act on Solitary Confinement, which
6 would limit confinement durations overall and end solitary confinement for vulnerable
7 populations. He has fought not just to limit the misuse of solitary confinement for people like
8 himself, but also for incarcerated people who have disabilities, who are pregnant, and who
9 are elderly; and

10 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad also advocated for immigrant justice at a federal level
11 through support of The New Way Forward Act, which seeks to end mandatory immigration
12 detention, automatic deportation practices, and other provisions to enhance equity for
13 communities of color in the country's immigration laws; and

14 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad also evolved as an artist in prison, teaching himself to draw
15 and specializing in custom greeting cards, especially cards with roses; and

16 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad additionally learned vocational trades while in prison, such
17 as welding, engine work, roofing, plumbing, and carpentry; and

18 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad served his sentence and was released from prison at age
19 50, but in August of 2021, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
20 transferred him into ICE custody without one day of freedom; and

21 WHEREAS, Shortly after he was detained by ICE, Mr. Prasad's mother passed away
22 from COVID, and ICE denied him the opportunity to be released, even temporarily, to say
23 goodbye or to attend her funeral; and

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1 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad then advocated against the visitation ban in ICE detention
2 centers, which indefinitely separates detainees from seeing loved ones, and was quoted in
3 The Bakersfield Californian around this advocacy; and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad has been detained by ICE for more than ten months, and
5 remains there today; and

6 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad applied for deferral of removal under the Convention
7 Against Torture because he fears he will be tortured if deported to Fiji, but an immigration
8 judge denied his application and ordered his deportation; and

9 WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ individuals in Fiji face discrimination, rejection from their
10 families and society, and hate crimes; and

11 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad's personal growth, community service, and strong ties to the
12 community clearly demonstrate the efforts he has made to rebuild his life and give back to
13 others; and

14 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad plans to provide mentorship to other survivors of childhood
15 sexual abuse once he is released; and

16 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad's transitional housing should he be released will be in San
17 Francisco; and

18 WHEREAS, the San Francisco Public Defender's Office houses a deportation
19 defense unit and currently represents Mr. Prasad; and

20 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad is a member of the LGTBQ+ community, and Mr. Prasad
21 has the support of many Bay Area community organizations, including Rainbow
22 Beginnings, a mutual aid organization in San Francisco dedicated to assisting LGBTQ+
23 migrants, The Asian Prisoner Support Committee, The Asian Law Caucus, The California
24 Collaborative for Immigrant Justice, and The Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity; and

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1 WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad has additional support from the Queer Detainee
2 Empowerment Project, Kern Welcoming and Extending Solidarity to Immigrants, and
3 Freedom for Immigrants; and

4 WHEREAS, Governor Newsom is originally from San Francisco, was Mayor of San
5 Francisco for seven years, and continues to have deep ties to San Francisco; and

6 WHEREAS, If Mr. Prasad is granted a pardon by Governor Newsom, he will no
7 longer be deportable and will be able to remain with his family and contribute his skills and
8 gifts to the Bay Area community; now, therefore, be it

9 RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco opposes the removal of
10 Salesh Prasad from the United States; and, be it

11 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges
12 Governor Newsom to grant Mr. Prasad a full pardon in order for him to remain lawfully in
13 the United States with his family; and, be it

14 FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution shall be sent to Governor
15 Newsom, other Federal and State Representatives in San Francisco, and Mr. Prasad's
16 counsel for appropriate distribution.

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