

1 [Apologizing to African Americans and Their Descendants]

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3 **Resolution apologizing on behalf of the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of**  
4 **San Francisco to African Americans and their descendants for systemic and structural**  
5 **discrimination, targeted acts of violence, and atrocities; and committing to the**  
6 **rectification and redress of past policies and misdeeds.**

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8 WHEREAS, San Francisco has a long history of creating and/or enforcing laws,  
9 policies, and institutions that have perpetuated racial inequity in our city, much of which is  
10 difficult to document due to historical erasure; and

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12 WHEREAS, Since the force enslavement of people of African descent, there has been  
13 both resistance to the institution of chattel slavery and demands of redress thereof; and

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15 WHEREAS, The genetic, psychological, financial, and racial trauma experienced by  
16 African Americans through slavery is one of the greatest crimes against humanity ever  
17 perpetuated and the practice of slavery in the United States was uniquely violent and wherein  
18 African Americans were foundationally and systematically disconnected from knowledge of  
19 their geographies, languages, names, relatives, and historic cultural practices; and

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21 WHEREAS, The practice of chattel slavery was abolished in 1865, centuries of  
22 brutality, discrimination, and debilitating harms to African Americans have continued through  
23 Jim Crow laws, Black codes, separate but equal, racist housing policies, and denial of equal  
24 access and opportunity; and

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26 WHEREAS, The conditions that have created such racial inequity are also  
27 compounded by the intersection of race with class, gender, sexuality, immigration status, and

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1 other identities and experiences that have resulted in inequitable treatment or opportunities;  
2 and

3 WHEREAS, With the acknowledgement that these findings are by no means an  
4 exhaustive list of systemic racism in San Francisco; and

5 WHEREAS, In 1937, San Francisco was one of 239 cities that was "redlined," by the  
6 Federal Home Loan Bank Board and the Home Owners' Loan Corporation and this process  
7 involved the creation of "residential security maps" which divided cities into areas that were  
8 appropriate for investment and areas that were more risk; and

9 WHEREAS, In San Francisco, neighborhoods with large populations of people of color  
10 including Western Addition, Bayview Hunters Point, the Haight, Chinatown, and parts of the  
11 Mission were deemed risky and some San Francisco neighborhoods were deemed risky by  
12 the Home Owners' Loan Corporation because of "undesirable racial elements," explicitly  
13 referring to Black residents, Jews, immigrants, and other people of color; and

14 WHEREAS, While residents in majority-white neighborhoods saw their property values  
15 and wealth rise, African Americans in redlined neighborhoods were denied loans, city  
16 investment, and infrastructure upgrades; this, in addition to the practice of racial covenants,  
17 resulted in systemic concentrations of poverty and blight in racially segregated communities;  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, In 1942, as World War II continued, African Americans were recruited from  
20 the South to the Bay Area for jobs in the shipyards and other war industries and many moved  
21 into the homes, businesses, and properties in the Fillmore; and

22 WHEREAS, In 1947, the San Francisco Planning Commission submitted a plan to raze  
23 and rebuild a large zone in the Fillmore encompassing 36 blocks and the following year, the  
24 San Francisco Redevelopment Agency was founded, which subsequently used redlining and  
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1 the Planning Commission’s proposed plan to institute “urban renewal” in the Fillmore and  
2 Western Addition, which had become a vibrant Black neighborhood but that was deemed  
3 “blighted” by San Francisco authorities; and

4 WHEREAS, Over the next 20 years in the name of “slum clearance,” many homes  
5 were razed, businesses destroyed, and more than 10,000 Black residents were displaced  
6 because of the policy; and

7 WHEREAS, Urban renewal was also instituted in other San Francisco neighborhoods,  
8 including South of Market, where 3,000 low-income and working-class residents of color and  
9 more than 700 small businesses were displaced; and

10 WHEREAS, In the 1950s and beyond, particularly in the context of a national Civil  
11 Rights Movement, systemic racism in San Francisco became much less explicit; and

12 WHEREAS, Moving away from overtly race-based exclusionary policies regarding land  
13 or businesses ownership, the City’s more recent and increasingly sophisticated racism has  
14 been defined by inaction or lack of intervention with regards to racial discrimination in  
15 employment, housing, education, healthcare, or the criminal justice system; and

16 WHEREAS, For centuries, through acts of willful and intentional discriminatory and  
17 exclusionary policies and practices, the City of San Francisco has systematically robbed Black  
18 San Franciscans of opportunities to build generational wealth; and

19 WHEREAS, Due to the City’s actions, Black San Franciscans have experienced the  
20 lack of access to affordable housing, quality education, living wage jobs, entrepreneurship  
21 opportunities, and thriving neighborhoods; and

22 WHEREAS, According to a study by the Brookings Institution in 2015, San Francisco  
23 had the ninth-highest general employment rate in the country (79%), but it was one of the  
24 cities with the highest employment disparity for Black people (53%) in the country; and  
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1           WHEREAS, According to a study on life expectancy by the San Francisco Health  
2 Improvement Project (SFHIP), the life expectancy at birth in San Francisco from 2015-2017  
3 was 72.1 for Black San Franciscans and the 2019 San Francisco Community Health Needs  
4 Assessment found that racial health inequities and poverty were foundation issues that affect  
5 the health of San Franciscans, including nutrition, stress, heart disease, and more; and

6           WHEREAS, In San Francisco, Black women are twice as likely as white women to give  
7 birth prematurely and have the highest rates of prenatal morbidity and SFHIP also found that  
8 between 2007 and 2016, Black mothers had about 4% of births in San Francisco, but  
9 experienced 50% of maternal deaths, and 15% of infant deaths; and

10           WHEREAS, Food insecurity in San Francisco also strongly trends along racial lines, for  
11 instance, 20-30% of Black/African American pregnant people are food insecure; and

12           WHEREAS, The median income for Black households in San Francisco is \$46,571 and  
13 Black residents experience poverty at three times the overall poverty rate in San Francisco,  
14 with 46% of Black children living in poverty; and

15           WHEREAS, The impact of redlining since 1937 can still be seen today as 87% of  
16 redlined neighborhoods in San Francisco are low-income neighborhoods currently undergoing  
17 gentrification and Black residents have the lowest home ownership rates at 31%; and

18           WHEREAS, According to a report from the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD)  
19 in the last quarter of 2022, Black residents were 25 times more likely than white people to  
20 experience use of force from SFPD than white residents; and

21           WHEREAS, Though Black people make up less than six percent of San Francisco's  
22 population, they comprised 35 percent of the city's arrests, and 23 percent of SFPD stops in  
23 the first quarter of 2023 and Black residents have been disproportionately impacted by fatal  
24 police shootings; and  
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1           WHEREAS, According to the 2022 Point in Time Count by the Department of  
2 Homelessness and Supportive Housing, Black, African American, or African unhoused people  
3 are overrepresented at 38% of the total homeless population compared to 6% of the general  
4 population; and

5           WHEREAS, Black students are significantly more likely to be suspended or expelled for  
6 less serious infractions compared to their white classmates and in San Francisco, Black  
7 students make up 37% of suspensions, compared to 7.3% of enrollment; and

8           WHEREAS, Blacks comprised 23.4% of the City workforce in 1976, but only 15.2% in  
9 2018, mimicking a dramatic decline in the Black San Francisco population and pointing to a  
10 push-out of the Black population as a whole; and

11           WHEREAS, Black workers are concentrated in the lowest-paid job classes, and are in  
12 a minority in the highest paid job classes and in 2018, while only approximately 15% of the  
13 workforce, Black workers made up 36% of dismissals, 24% of probationary releases, and 38%  
14 of medical separations; and

15           WHEREAS, Although the City has taken steps to undo the damage caused by past  
16 policies and practices, the racial disparities caused continue to the present date and despite  
17 progress in addressing explicit discrimination, racial inequality continue to be deep,  
18 persuasive, and persistent in San Francisco and no formal apology has ever been issued; and

19           WHEREAS, According to the African American Redress Network, less than twenty  
20 local or state governments have offered an official, blanket apology for slavery and its'  
21 impacts on African Americans; and

22           WHEREAS, Nine States that have issued apologizes for their history of discrimination,  
23 violence, and impact in the enslavement of African Americans, including, Alabama,  
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1 Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Tennessee, and  
2 Virginia; and

3 WHEREAS, In 2022, Boston became the first major city in to pass a Resolution to  
4 acknowledge, condemn, and apologize for the role played by the city in the slavery of African  
5 Americans and the ongoing detrimental impacts experienced by the Black People of Boston  
6 while pledging efforts to repair past and present harm done to African Americans; and

7 WHEREAS, On July 7, 2023, the San Francisco African American Reparations  
8 Advisory Committee published its final recommendations to include that the City and County  
9 of San Francisco and its agencies must issues a formal apology for the past harms, and  
10 commit to making substantial ongoing, systemic, and programmatic investments in Black  
11 communities to address historical harms; and

12 WHEREAS, An apology for grievous injustices cannot erase the past, but admission of  
13 the historic wrongdoings committed can aid us in solving the critical problems of discrimination  
14 and racism facing San Francisco and the broader United States today; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors acknowledges acts of  
16 fundamental injustice, terror, cruelty, and brutality committed against the Black San Francisco  
17 community; and, be it

18 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors acknowledges  
19 the depth of harm experienced by generations of Black San Franciscans and the debilitating  
20 impact this has had; and, be it

21 FURTHER RESOLVED, On behalf of the City and County of San Francisco, the San  
22 Francisco Board of Supervisors offers its deepest apologies to all African Americans and their  
23 descendants who came to San Francisco and were victims of systemic and structural  
24 discrimination, institutionalize racism, targeted acts of violence, and atrocities; and, be it

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1           FURTHER RESOLVED, On behalf of the City and County of San Francisco, the San  
2   Francisco Board of Supervisors further apologizes to all African Americans and their  
3   descendants who came to San Francisco, on the historic failure to adequately improve the  
4   social determinants of health for Black San Franciscans due to structural racism which has  
5   had lasting and generational impacts to the mental, physical and environmental wellbeing for  
6   Black residents; and, be it

7           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco commit to non-  
8   repetition of the policies and practices which caused these harms; commit to the restoration  
9   for the ways that racism has caused insult to Black humanity and manifested in both visible  
10   and invisible trauma through the means of compensation, restoration, and rehabilitation; and  
11   commit to making substantial ongoing, systemic, and programmatic investments in Black  
12   communities to address historical and present harms; and be it

13          FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges each City department to  
14   engage in the process of reflecting on their own role in the City's history of structural  
15   discrimination, and to issue their own apology for their actions.

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