

1 [Recognizing and Supporting Ethnic and Community Journalism]

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3 **Resolution recognizing the importance and significance of ethnic and community**  
4 **journalism in San Francisco to a healthy democracy and strengthening the relationship**  
5 **between ethnic and community journalism and City departments.**

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7 WHEREAS, San Francisco's ethnic and community journalism outlets foster an  
8 informed citizenry who are reliant on accurate and unbiased news reporting to shape  
9 collective judgement; and

10 WHEREAS, Journalists working for independent and fact-based community and ethnic  
11 journalism outlets play a major role in combating misinformation and disinformation, especially  
12 by using their community knowledge and connections to debunk fraudulent or misleading  
13 content; and

14 WHEREAS, San Francisco plays a vital role in fostering independent, sustainable,  
15 locally-owned and run community and ethnic journalism outlets dedicated to informing  
16 residents and empowering communities; and

17 WHEREAS, San Francisco is home to numerous ethnic and community news outlets  
18 that span a wide range of diverse neighborhoods and communities; and

19 WHEREAS, Ethnic and community journalism outlets in San Francisco serve as  
20 essential sources of news for communities of color and immigrants; and

21 WHEREAS, San Francisco's ethnic and community journalism outlets broadly reflect  
22 the City's cultural diversity, including outlets focused on specific neighborhoods, immigrant  
23 communities, native languages, religions, sexual orientation, races, genders, disabilities, and  
24 professions; and

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1           WHEREAS, San Francisco’s ethnic and community journalism outlets allow the City to  
2 better reach a diverse range of San Franciscans, especially in communities that don’t have  
3 access to mainstream media, ensuring all San Franciscans are aware of City government  
4 programs and services; and

5           WHEREAS, San Francisco’s ethnic and community journalism outlets often struggle  
6 sustaining news operations with the continued migration of advertising dollars to corporate  
7 social media giants; and

8           WHEREAS, Ethnic and community journalism outlets in San Francisco employ  
9 hundreds of workers in specialized fields that are vital to civic engagement and the diversity of  
10 the City's workforce; and

11           WHEREAS, Ethnic and community journalism refers to outlets in San Francisco that  
12 are locally owned or run and one-third of its readership are San Franciscans; and

13           WHEREAS, These outlets must also employ at least one full-time staff member  
14 residing within 30 miles of San Francisco, committed to gathering, preparing, and  
15 disseminating original community news for the local community's benefit; and

16           WHEREAS, Beat reporting, the day-to-day coverage of a particular field that allows a  
17 journalist to develop expertise and cultivate sources, has ceased to be a viable career for  
18 would-be journalists due to the decimation of newsroom budgets; and

19           WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic took a substantial economic toll on the local  
20 news industry in the United States, seeing more than 100 local newsroom closures, and  
21 contributing to significant budget cuts and staff layoffs, from which the industry has yet to fully  
22 recover; and

23           WHEREAS, The money that the City and County of San Francisco spends on  
24 advertising and outreach for key programs and services can be an important source of  
25 revenue for community and ethnic journalism outlets; and

1           WHEREAS, A 2023 San Francisco Budget and Legislative Analyst report found that  
2 out of 98 media outlets operating in the City, only seven receive City advertising dollars; and

3           WHEREAS, The report found many City departments purchase ads through a third-  
4 party, such as an advertising agency, and many ads placed through third-party vendors are  
5 not categorized as advertising in the City's financial system, making it challenging to  
6 determine exactly how much the city spends on advertising overall; and

7           WHEREAS, The report also found that increasing city government advertising in  
8 community and ethnic journalism outlets will require a dedicated effort to streamlining the  
9 City's processes to make them simpler for City staff and local publishers to navigate; and

10          WHEREAS, The San Francisco Budget and Legislative Analyst Office suggests that  
11 the City create a directory of community and ethnic journalism outlets to raise awareness  
12 among City employees; and

13          WHEREAS, To further strengthen these relationships and better understand the City's  
14 advertising spending, the San Francisco Budget and Legislative Analyst Office recommends  
15 City departments include report-back requirements in all city contracts with advertising  
16 campaigns; and

17          WHEREAS, The San Francisco Budget and Legislative Analyst Office recommends a  
18 staff member to serve as a liaison between City departments and community and ethnic  
19 journalism outlets, with the goals of enhancing accessibility to city advertising opportunities for  
20 local news providers, improving efficiency in the process, and optimizing advertising spending;  
21 and

22          WHEREAS, It also recommends a citywide contract for advertising services, and  
23 developing a process of reporting how much money is spent in local community and ethnic  
24 media each year, so progress can be tracked and accessed by the public; and

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1           WHEREAS, The Budget and Legislative Analyst found that spending on community  
2 and ethnic media for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year exceeds fifty percent of total print and digital  
3 discretionary advertising according to both the City’s financial system and its survey of City  
4 departments; and

5           WHEREAS, Common Cause California proposes increasing “the proportion of  
6 advertising the City of San Francisco purchases in local community and ethnic media” in its  
7 report, “Local Voices on Local News: Community Perspectives and Policy Recommendations  
8 for Strengthening San Francisco’s Journalism Ecosystem,” and called on the City of County of  
9 San Francisco to address the alarming ethnic and community journalism crisis; and

10          WHEREAS, The “Local Voice on Local News” report found that many San Franciscans  
11 use flyers, bulletin boards and programming at the buildings where they live to get the  
12 information they need when major news outlet don’t provide the information they need or  
13 report about their local communities; and

14          WHEREAS, The same report found media attention and advertising is unequally  
15 distributed across the city’s neighborhoods, with people in lower income communities being  
16 underrepresented; and

17          WHEREAS, A robust, diverse, and sustainable ethnic and community journalism  
18 presence leads to civic engagement and the buttressing of democratic norms and practices;  
19 and now, therefore, be it

20          RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges City departments to sustain their  
21 spending of at least half of their annual discretionary advertising budgets with locally owned  
22 and run ethnic and community journalism outlets, which includes nonprofit and for-profit media  
23 organizations; and, be it

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1           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the City to publicly report  
2 how much money is spent on ethnic and community journalism publications each year, and,  
3 be it;

4           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors affirms that local news serves  
5 an essential function of delivering news and City resources to San Franciscans; and, be it;

6           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors recognizes local news as a  
7 public good.

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