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# Mayor's Disability Council

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**Sheri Albers**  
**Alex Madrid**  
Co-Chairs

September 11, 2024

Supervisor Aaron Peskin  
San Francisco Board of Supervisors

Dear Supervisor Peskin,

We are writing to express our strong disagreement with the recommendation regarding the Mayor's Disability Council (MDC) in the Civil Grand Jury Report, "Commission Impossible: Getting the Most from San Francisco Commissions".

"Getting the most" from the MDC means understanding its purpose. The Report's recommendation suggests a poor grasp of the MDC's mission and the scope of the problems it addresses.

The MDC ensures a voice for one of San Francisco's largest marginalized communities. One in ten San Franciscans -- 96,000 residents -- report having a disability. Almost half of people with disabilities are under age 65. One in four people with disabilities live in poverty. Even adults with disabilities who are employed are more than twice as likely to experience poverty. 64% of residents with disabilities are people of color. [DAAS-  
infographic-disability-2021-v5 \(sfhsa.org\)](https://www.sfhsa.org/infographic-disability-2021-v5)

People with disabilities are very diverse. We have different accessibility and service needs. There is no substitute for our lived experience...which should guide and inform the many departments and offices in San Francisco government that we often depend upon. Little in the Civil Grand Jury Report appears to value this lived experience. Especially because the City of San Francisco has very few employees with disabilities in policy positions, the real world experience of people with disabilities is vital for San Francisco to adequately serve a very large constituency.

The mission of the MDC is to bring our personal knowledge to San Francisco through

- Advising the Mayor and City Departments on disability issues
- Working with the Mayor's Office on Disability to ensure ADA Compliance
- Providing a public forum to discuss disability issues

In fact, the Civil Grand Jury report mistakenly describes the MDC's mission as:

"Recommends policies to improve coordination of care within different settings (home-based, community-based, and institutional care) and service sectors (health, supportive services, housing)." Page 60.

While inaccurately assuming that the purpose of the MDC involves “care,” the Civil Grand Jury recommends that the MDC be abolished. In contrast, the Civil Grand Jury does not recommend abolishing other boards and commissions focusing on marginalized communities

San Francisco can only benefit from hearing directly from the disability community. We are baffled by the apparent indifference to the specific needs of people who are historically ignored and underserved, and whose civil rights are too often thwarted. For decades, the disabled community has had to face such a lack of understanding of the severe challenges it faces, and has always been placed last. This is the situation which which the MDC aims to address and improve.

If the initiatives on the November ballot to reduce the number of boards and commissions are approved, there must be specific measures to counteract the bias against people with disabilities evident in this report. We hope that you will be open to meeting with us to explore how to protect and retain the role we have served.

Sincerely,

Alex Madrid  
Co-Chair

Sheri Albers  
Co-Chair

Cc: Jennifer Johnston  
Sophie Hayward  
Angela Calvillo



San Francisco  
Board of Supervisors  
**Food Security  
Task Force**

September 12, 2024

San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board

Dear Angela Calvillo:

As the Chair of the San Francisco Food Security Task Force (FSTF), I am writing to correct misconceptions in the Civil Grand Jury 2023-24 report *Commission Impossible* pertaining to the operations, achievements, and benefits of the FSTF.

The FSTF is a nationally respected public body that benefits the City and County of San Francisco by contributing expertise to elected officials and city departments, fostering cross sector collaboration, promoting transparency, providing community informed data and recommendations, and supporting a healthier San Francisco.

Finding 3.1 in *Commission Impossible* refers to Appendix B “Abolish or Retain”, a list of commissions/boards the report advises to abolish or retain. According to the report, out of 115 boards and commissions listed, “[t]he Jury found 15 that appear to duplicate the work of other bodies and/or whose minutes and other documents show numerous canceled meetings, little to no public engagement, or a lack of concrete achievements.” The FSTF is named as one of the 15 to be abolished. The report incorrectly asserts that it is “Redundant” recommending that the Human Service Agency perform this activity. The FSTF is the only group dedicated to cross sector collaboration to address food insecurity.

Below is additional information about the Food Security Task Force:

Civil Grand Jury rationale for which commissions to abolish	Facts pertaining to the Food Security Task Force
<i>Costs: Average FTE of 0.8 staff support per Commission</i>	<b>FSTF has less than 0.8 FTE in city staff support.</b>
<i>Redundant Efforts</i>	<b>There is no other city department or public body dedicated to cross sector collaboration to address food insecurity.</b>
<i>Meetings cancelled due to lack of quorum</i>	<b>FSTF has not canceled meetings due to lack of quorum. The FSTF has less than 15% average vacancy.</b>
<i>Little public comment or engagement at meetings</i>	<b>The FSTF is well attended by the public (12-40 non-members per meeting) and non-members regularly engage and comment. Since January 2023, the average number of non-member attendees 23.</b>
<i>Annual Reports not available</i>	<b>FSTF issues annual report of recommendations. Includes current data, threats to food security, and opportunities and recommendations to improve food security. All reports are provided to the BOS, sent across a listserv of over 200 members, and posted to the FSTF website. The report is also presented to elected officials, community coalitions and department leaders.</b>
<i>More than 75% of advisory bodies have no sunset date</i>	<b>FSTF has a sunset date of July 1, 2026.</b>

<i>Few accomplishments</i>	<b>See following list of accomplishments</b>
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**Accomplishments of the Food Security Task Force:**

- Regarded as a national model for food advisory bodies. Other cities, counties and coalitions across the country regularly contact the Food Security Task Force as they form their own food advisory bodies.
- Strong attendance by multiple City agencies (about 6 – 8 Departments regularly) and community groups (about 10 - 15 regularly) at FSTF meetings.
- Supports cross sector alignment to address food insecurity in San Francisco (government, CBOs, Faith based organizations, private philanthropy, public)
- Conducts city-wide food assessments in 2013, 2018, and 2023.
- Held two Special Meetings to review data and provide recommendations for the 2023 Biennial Food Security and Equity Report. Meetings were attended by city agencies, Mayor’s Office, and community organizations.
- Makes annual recommendations for food programming, funding, and policy to improve food security and equity.
- Provides updates on state and federal food policies that impact San Francisco.
- In preparation for the FSTF sunset date, and in alignment with BOS and Mayor Breed’s leadership to reimagine food security, the FSTF formed a subcommittee to explore best practices from other food advisory bodies from across the United States. Recommendations will be presented in Fall 2024.
- Advanced standard measurement of food security across city and community programs.

**Comparison to Peer Cities and Counties**

Addressing food insecurity and advancing food justice requires the collective effort of government, community, philanthropy, and residents to address. According to Johns Hopkins Center for Livable Futures, there were over 300 active food policy councils in the United States in 2023. Below are examples of food policy advisory councils such as the Food Security Task Force embedded in government:

- LA County Food Equity Roundtable
- City of Houston Food Insecurity Board
- Indianapolis Community Food Access Advisory Commission
- Baltimore Food Policy Action Coalition
- Knoxville-Knox County Food Policy Council (Knoxville TN)
- DC Food Policy Council
- Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council

Please feel free to reach out to me for further information.

Sincerely,

Cissie Bonini  
 Chair, Food Security Task Force  
 Executive Director, Vouchers 4 Veggies/EatSF

CC: Aaron Peskin  
 Calvin Yan