File No. 260519 **Committee Item No.** _____
Board Item No. 21

COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Committee: _____ **Date:** _____
Board of Supervisors Meeting **Date:** May 19, 2026

Cmte Board

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Prepared by: Calvin Ho **Date:** May 15, 2026
Prepared by: _____ **Date:** _____

[Commemorating the 140th Anniversary of Yick Wo vs. Hopkins and Supporting Placemaking]

Resolution commemorating the 140th anniversary of the landmark Yick Wo vs. Hopkins civil rights case and expressing support for placemaking that recognizes the Chinese American community's contributions to American civil rights.

WHEREAS, Lee Yick, the owner of Yick Wo laundry, played a major role in U.S. Civil Rights history when he challenged the discriminatory application of a racist San Francisco ordinance; and

WHEREAS, The City of San Francisco denied necessary permits to all but one of more than 200 Chinese laundries, including Yick's, while granting permits to all but one white-owned laundries; and

WHEREAS, The Yick Wo laundry was located at the northeast corner of Third Street and Harrison Street at approximately 349 Third Street in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, The City declined the renewal of Yick's permit despite his operating for over two decades with a clean safety record; and

WHEREAS, Yick was fined and then imprisoned for refusing to pay, which led to him filing suit in 1885 along with Wo Lee, another San Francisco laundry operator; and

WHEREAS, The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, also known as the Chinese Six Companies, helped raise $20,000, over $600,000 in today's dollars, to hire one of the best lawyers of the day, Hall McAllister, to defend them; and

WHEREAS, The defendants appealed to the Supreme Court of the United States in *Yick Wo vs. Hopkins* and in a unanimous ruling on May 10, 1886, the Court held that a law applied in a racially discriminatory way violated the constitutional guarantee of equal protection to "all persons"—citizen or not; and

WHEREAS, The decision remains foundational to American civil rights law and has been cited in hundreds of cases; and

WHEREAS, *Yick Wo vs. Hopkins* belongs to a remarkable and still largely underrecognized tradition of legal action by Chinese American immigrants who fought discriminatory laws in American courts at a time when they were barred from citizenship and stripped of political power; and

WHEREAS, While overlooked cases like *Yick Wo vs. Hopkins* originated from the Chinese American community, the results built the constitutional architecture that would later protect all who reside in this country; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco Heritage and the Chinese Historical Society of America have joined a host of community organizations and officials to campaign for this recognition in May 2026, the 140th anniversary of *Yick Wo vs. Hopkins*; and

WHEREAS, The site of Yick Wo laundry near Third Street and Harrison Street is entitled for housing development; and

WHEREAS, This site is worthy of a tribute to the Chinese American community's contributions to American civil rights; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors commemorates the 140th anniversary of the *Yick Wo vs. Hopkins* case and expresses its support for placemaking that recognizes the Chinese American community's contributions to American civil rights; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors recognizes that placemaking will create a powerful physical reminder that San Franciscans excluded from power shaped the rights that all people share today, and will help make the Chinese American community's contributions to American civil rights permanently visible.

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):

Dorsey; Chan, Chen, Mandelman, Sauter

Subject:

Commemorating the 140th Anniversary of Yick Wo vs. Hopkins and Supporting Placemaking

Long Title or text listed:

Resolution commemorating the 140th anniversary of the landmark Yick Wo vs. Hopkins civil rights case and expressing support for placemaking that recognizes the Chinese community's contributions to American civil rights

Signature of Sponsoring Supervisor: Matt Dorsey