

1 [Condemnation of the System of Sexual Enslavement During World War II]

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3 **Resolution condemning recent statements by Osaka Mayor Toru Hashimoto claiming**
4 **that the system of sex slavery utilized by Japan in occupied Asian countries from the**
5 **1930s through World War II was a military necessity and that there is no proof that the**
6 **sexual servitude was involuntary and coerced by Japanese authorities.**

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8 WHEREAS, San Francisco and Osaka, Japan have enjoyed a continuous sister-city
9 relationship since 1957 and the people of both cities have been cultivating friendship and
10 promoting mutual benefits through regular commercial, cultural, and educational exchanges
11 and cooperation; and

12 WHEREAS, The cultivation and maintenance of such friendship and benefits depend
13 on mutual understanding, trust, and respect, including but not limited to a shared
14 understanding of the history between the two countries and of the world and a commitment to
15 respect human dignity and rights and truth in history; and

16 WHEREAS, According to most international historians, as many as 200,000 women
17 and girls in the Indo-Pacific region, including Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Taiwanese,
18 Indonesian, Dutch, Chamorro, Australian, Vietnamese, American, and Burmese, were forced
19 to serve as “comfort women,” a euphemism for sex slaves widely deployed by the Japanese
20 government; and

21 WHEREAS, Toru Hashimoto, the current mayor of Osaka, in contradiction to well-
22 established history and shared values and standards of human decency and respect, shocked
23 the world on May 13, 2013, by claiming that the system of using women of Asian territories
24 occupied by Japan as sex slaves for Japanese troops during the Pacific War, 1937-1945, was
25 a wartime “necessity” in order to give members of Japan’s military a chance “to rest,” and

1 despite strong criticisms at home and abroad, he again denied on May 19th that the “comfort
2 women” were “sex slaves who were forced into service through violence, threat, and
3 abduction;” and

4 WHEREAS, The remarks of Mayor Hashimoto were soundly denounced by the
5 governments of Japan’s Asian neighbors, most notably China and South Korea, by a
6 multipartisan group of ten Japanese female lawmakers who called him “the shame of Osaka”
7 and characterized his statements as “ignorant of,” and “trampling on human rights,” likewise
8 decried by the U.S. State Department as “outrageous and offensive,” censured by U.S.
9 Congressmen Mike Honda and Steve Israel as “contemptible and repulsive” remarks that
10 warranted urging the Japanese government to issue a “formal acknowledgement, apology,
11 and acceptance of historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner;” and
12 condemned as “deplorable remarks” for which he should “make a full apology,” by five female
13 Nobel Peace Prize laureates from the U.S., Iran, Liberia, Ireland, and Guatemala, as recently
14 as May 30, 2013; and

15 WHEREAS, In response to comments by the U.S. State Department and U.S.
16 Congressmen, Mayor Hashimoto refused to disavow his remarks but instead stated that “It’s
17 not only Japan but also many other countries including the U.S. that have abused women’s
18 human rights in the course of battle;” and

19 WHEREAS, Amnesty International issued its annual report on the state of human rights
20 around the world on May 23, 2013, and criticized Japan for “continuing to reject calls for
21 justice of the survivors of Japan’s military sexual slavery system” and attacked Prime Minister
22 Shinzo Abe, who became Prime Minister on December 26, 2012, and nine future members of
23 his cabinet, when they jointly signed an advertisement in the November 4, 2012 New Jersey
24 Star Ledger that “denied [that the] Japanese Imperial Army forced women into military sexual
25 slavery during World War II;” and

1 WHEREAS, In response to widespread criticism of his remarks, Mayor Hashimoto
2 appeared before some 300 foreign journalists in Tokyo on May 27, 2013 and defended his
3 earlier remarks by stating that he did not endorse the wartime brothels but had merely
4 described the thinking of military commanders at the time, that Japan had been unfairly
5 singled out over the “comfort women” given that other countries’ military forces were also
6 guilty of sexual abuses, and that U.S. soldiers on Okinawa should use the island’s “adult
7 entertainment industry” in order to reduce incidences of sexual assault on local women; and

8 WHEREAS, Mayor Hashimoto also explicitly denied on May 27, 2013 that Japan had
9 abducted and trafficked women and girls for frontline brothels during World War II based on
10 “the will of the state authority,” a conclusion not shared by most international historians and
11 legal authorities; now, therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco
13 strongly condemns the attitude and statements of Mayor Toru Hashimoto of Osaka justifying
14 the state-sponsored “comfort women” system which forced hundreds of thousands of Asian
15 women into sexual servitude for the Japanese military and denying the historical veracity of
16 such atrocities committed against women and girls in countries occupied by Japan throughout
17 East and Southeast Asia; and, be it

18 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors calls on President Barack
19 Obama and the U.S. Congress to formally ask the Japanese government to initiate legislation,
20 to be adopted by the Japanese Diet, formally acknowledging the wartime atrocities committed
21 by the Japanese government in countries that it invaded and occupied, apologize for the
22 atrocities committed by its soldiers, and compensate the victims of Japanese aggression,
23 including the survivors of the forced sexual enslavement during World War II, akin to the
24 actions taken by the U.S. Congress in 1988 when it passed legislation acknowledging and
25 apologizing for its unlawful detention of Japanese Americans during World War II and the

1 actions taken by the German government formally acknowledging the atrocities committed by
2 its wartime government and military forces during World War II; and, be it

3 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges Mayor Edwin Lee, in his
4 capacity as the mayor of Osaka’s sister city, San Francisco, to present this resolution to
5 Mayor Hashimoto and the City Council of Osaka and urge Mayor Hashimoto to publicly retract
6 his statements and apologize to the survivors of Japanese government-sponsored “comfort
7 women” system of forced sexual slavery; and, be it

8 FURTHER RESOLVED, That despite Mayor Hashimoto’s repugnant statements, the
9 Board of Supervisors expresses its profound and long-standing respect and affection for the
10 people of Osaka and its desire and commitment to continue the friendship, cooperation, and
11 exchange programs under the sister-city agreement signed in 1957; and, be it

12 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby directs
13 the Clerk of the Board to send a copy of this resolution to President Barack Obama, U.S.
14 Secretary of State John Kerry, Mayor Toru Hashimoto, the members of the City Council of
15 Osaka, the San Francisco Congressional delegation, United States Senator Dianne Feinstein,
16 United States Senator Barbara Boxer, United States Congressman Mike Honda, and United
17 States Congressman Steve Israel.

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