
WHEREAS, Language access is a civil right affirmed at every level of government, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on Lau v. Nichols in 1974; and

WHEREAS, Language access is an essential key to full and meaningful participation in a democracy for many immigrant and newcomer communities; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco is one of the most culturally rich and linguistically diverse cities in the nation with over a third of the population immigrant and nearly half speaking a language other than English at home; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Board of Supervisors views the City's language diversity as a competitive advantage in a global economy; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Board of Supervisors enacted the Equal Access to Services Ordinance in 2001, amended it in 2009 as the Language Access Ordinance (LAO), and has continued to provide leadership on language access; and

WHEREAS, The LAO is one of the strongest language access laws in the nation, demonstrating San Francisco’s ongoing commitment to equal and full access to services and timely information; and

WHEREAS, The Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA) is charged with monitoring citywide compliance and has ensured that the LAO is implemented with the highest level of integrity; and
WHEREAS, The report includes community input, fact-based findings, and concrete recommendations on strengthening LAO efficacy and better serving Limited English Proficient (LEP) residents; and

WHEREAS, While most City departments continue to make progress in compliance and recognize the importance of providing meaningful and timely multilingual access to City programs, services and information, challenges remain for others; and

WHEREAS, On March 11, 2013, the San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission voted unanimously to adopt the findings in the 2013 LAO report; and

WHEREAS, On July 11, 2013, the Board of Supervisors held a hearing at the Government Audits and Oversight Committee and listened to the findings of the 2013 LAO report from the Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs, heard reports from Tier 1 and Tier 2 departments for areas of improvement, and received feedback from community-based organizations to further strengthening the LAO ordinance to provide better language services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors recognizes and endorses the findings in "Advancing Language Access in San Francisco: Language Access Ordinance Annual Compliance Summary Report, March 2013" and commends the Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs for its ongoing work; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors reaffirms its commitment to improving and increasing the City's capacity to meet the needs of language diverse residents, and encourages City agencies to increase their efforts to provide relevant and meaningful access to public information for all San Francisco residents, regardless of the languages they speak.