

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Sam Dodge, Director, Housing Opportunity, Partnerships and Engagement  
Theo Miller, Director, HOPE SF  
Richard A. Carranza, Superintendent of Schools, San Francisco Unified School District  
Barbara A. Garcia, Director, Department of Public Health  
Trent Rhorer, Executive Director, Human Services Agency  
Nicole Elliott, Mayor's Office  
Robert Collins, Acting Executive Director, Rent Board

FROM: Erica Major, Assistant Committee Clerk, Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee, Board of Supervisors

DATE: March 15, 2016

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

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The Board of Supervisors' Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee has received the following proposed legislation, introduced by Supervisor Campos on March 8, 2016:

**File No. 160223**

**Ordinance making findings and declaring the existence of a shelter crisis in San Francisco under California Government Code, Sections 8698, et seq.**

If you have any comments or reports to be included with the file, please forward them to me at the Board of Supervisors, City Hall, Room 244, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102.

c:  
Dee Schexnayder, Housing Opportunity, Partnerships and Engagement  
Christine Keener, Housing Opportunity, Partnerships and Engagement  
Barbara Amaro, HOPE SF  
Chris Armentrout, San Francisco Unified School District  
JAMILA BROOKS, San Francisco Unified School District  
Esther Casco, San Francisco Unified School District  
Greg Wagner, Department of Public Health  
Colleen Chawla, Department of Public Health

1 [Declaring Existence of a Shelter Crisis]

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3 **Ordinance making findings and declaring the existence of a shelter crisis in San**  
4 **Francisco under California Government Code Sections 8698 et seq.**

5 NOTE: **Unchanged Code text and uncodified text** are in plain Arial font.  
6 **Additions to Codes** are in *single-underline italics Times New Roman font*.  
7 **Deletions to Codes** are in ~~*italics Times New Roman font*~~.  
8 **Board amendment additions** are in double-underlined Arial font.  
9 **Board amendment deletions** are in ~~Arial font~~.  
10 **Asterisks (\* \* \* \*)** indicate the omission of unchanged Code  
11 subsections or parts of tables.

12 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

13 Section 1. Findings.

14 (a) A significant number of people in San Francisco cannot obtain adequate or  
15 appropriate shelter. According to the San Francisco biennial homeless count taken in  
16 January 2015, there were 6,686 individuals without a place to live, a 3.8% increase over the  
17 6,436 people counted in 2013. In addition, there were 853 unaccompanied children and  
18 transitional-aged-youth, for a total of 7,539 homeless people. The number of homeless  
19 people rose in seven of the 11 supervisorial districts in the city.

20 (b) San Francisco's homeless population is aging with deteriorating health, needing  
21 more services. According to the 2015 homeless count, 22% of the homeless were between  
22 the ages of 51 and 60, up from 14% in 2013, and 8% were 61 or older, up from 3% in 2013.

23 (c) The inability to obtain adequate or appropriate shelter threatens the health and  
24 safety of those persons. Homelessness is an independent risk factor for a number of  
25 illnesses through its association with exposure to harsh weather, high levels of stress, sleep  
deprivation, general unsanitary surroundings, lack of access to hygiene facilities, and bad

1 nutrition. Sleep deprivation, for example, impairs cognitive processes and increases the risk  
2 of heart disease, heart attack, heart failure, irregular heartbeat, high blood pressure, stroke  
3 and diabetes.

4 (e) According to the National Health Care for the Homeless Council:

5 (1) Homelessness creates new health problems and exacerbates existing ones.  
6 Living on the street or in crowded homeless shelters exposes people to communicable  
7 disease (e.g., TB, respiratory illnesses, etc.), violence, malnutrition, and harmful weather  
8 exposure. Behavioral health issues such as depression or alcoholism often develop or are  
9 made worse. Conditions among people who are homeless are frequently co-occurring, with a  
10 complex mix of severe physical, psychiatric, substance use, and social problems.

11 (2) Common conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and asthma  
12 become worse where there is no safe place to store medications or syringes properly. Injuries  
13 that result from violence or accidents may not heal properly if bathing, keeping bandages  
14 clean, and getting proper rest and recuperation are not possible due to homelessness. And  
15 minor issues such as cuts or common colds may easily develop into large problems such as  
16 infections or pneumonia. High stress, unhealthy and dangerous environments, and an  
17 inability to control food intake often result in visits to emergency rooms and hospitalization  
18 which worsen overall health.

19 (3) Research among patients using health centers demonstrates that even  
20 among largely low-income populations, there are significant disparities when comparing  
21 homeless and non-homeless populations. Individuals experiencing homelessness have  
22 disproportionately high rates of acute and chronic illness, such as hypertension, diabetes,  
23 asthma, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, heart problems, stroke, liver condition, weak/failing  
24 kidneys, cancer, and HIV/AIDS. Each of these conditions is challenging to manage, even for  
25

1 the general population. Absent stable housing, they may become nearly impossible to control  
2 or cure.

3 (4) Those experiencing homelessness are three to four times more likely to die  
4 prematurely than their housed counterparts, and experience an average life expectancy as  
5 low as 41 years.

6 (f) According to studies cited by the American Psychological Association:

7 (1) People without homes have higher rates of hospitalizations for physical  
8 illnesses, mental illness, and substance abuse than other populations.

9 (2) Rates of mental illness among people who are homeless in the United  
10 States are twice the rate found for the general population.

11 (3) 47% of homeless women meet the criteria for a diagnosis of major  
12 depressive disorder—twice the rate of women in general.

13 (4) People who are homeless and also suffer from mental illness are more likely  
14 to use hospitals than regular outpatient care, which is not only more expensive but results in  
15 fragmented service and less attention paid to ongoing mental health needs.

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17 Section 2. Legal Authority.

18 (a) California Government Code sections 8698 through 8698.2 authorize the governing  
19 body of a political subdivision, including a city and county such as San Francisco, to declare  
20 the existence of a shelter crisis upon a finding by the governing body that a significant number  
21 of persons within the jurisdiction are without the ability to obtain shelter, and that the situation  
22 has resulted in a threat to the health and safety of those persons.

23 (b) Upon the declaration of a shelter crisis, the subdivision may allow persons unable  
24 to obtain housing to occupy designated public facilities belonging to that subdivision while the  
25 crisis lasts.

1 (c) Under the Government Code, the subdivision would be immune from liability for  
2 ordinary negligence when using public facilities for emergency housing in this way. The  
3 subdivision also could suspend state or local regulatory law setting housing, health, or safety  
4 standards to the extent that strict compliance would prevent, hinder, or delay the mitigation of  
5 the effects of the shelter crisis. The subdivision could, in place of such standards, enact its  
6 own health and safety standards for the shelters consistent with ensuring basic public health  
7 and safety in the facilities. These provisions would apply only to additional public facilities  
8 opened to the homeless in response to the shelter crisis.

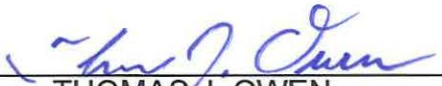
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10 Section 3. Declaration of Shelter Crisis. The Board of Supervisors hereby finds that a  
11 significant number of persons within the City are without the ability to obtain shelter, and that  
12 the situation has resulted in a threat to the health and safety of those persons. The Board of  
13 Supervisors therefore declares the existence of a shelter crisis in the City and County of San  
14 Francisco. Any subsequent action taken by the City pursuant to this declaration shall comply  
15 with all relevant requirements of the Charter.

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1 Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective 30 days after  
2 enactment. Enactment occurs when the Mayor signs the ordinance, the Mayor returns the  
3 ordinance unsigned or does not sign the ordinance within ten days of receiving it, or the Board  
4 of Supervisors overrides the Mayor's veto of the ordinance.

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7 APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
8 DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

9  
10 By:

  
11 THOMAS J. OWEN  
12 Deputy City Attorney

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