

1 [Supporting California State Senate Bill 1157 (Mitchell) - Strengthening Family Connections]

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3 **Resolution supporting California State Senate Bill 1157, authored by Senator Mitchell,**  
4 **to strengthen family connections in order to ensure families have access to in-person**  
5 **visits with loved ones incarcerated in county jails.**

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7 WHEREAS, The parent-child relationship is a crucial social bond; and

8 WHEREAS, Legislation introduced by state Senator Holly Mitchell would preserve  
9 meaningful visitation rights for people in local correctional facilities, juvenile halls, juvenile  
10 homes, ranches, and camps, as well as private detention facilities contracting with counties by  
11 clarifying that their right to a minimum amount of visitation refers to in-person visits, which  
12 cannot be replaced with video visits; and

13 WHEREAS, California State Senate Bill 1157 (SB1157) will help strengthen family  
14 connections by ensuring access to in-person visits between incarcerated and detained  
15 persons and their loved ones; and

16 WHEREAS, Providing access to visitation improves public safety, reduces recidivism,  
17 and reduces negative impacts on loved ones, especially children whose loved ones are  
18 incarcerated or detained; and

19 WHEREAS, A 2015 Prison Policy Initiative report showed that 74% of county jails  
20 across the country that implemented video visitation ended up eliminating in-person visitation;  
21 and

22 WHEREAS, At least five California counties (Kings, Napa, San Bernardino, San Diego,  
23 and Solano) have eliminated in-person visitation in at least one of their jails, meaning families  
24 are only able to visit their loved ones through a computer screen, and two counties (Imperial  
25 and Placer) have severely restricted in-person visitation since adopting video visitation, and

1 three counties (Orange, San Mateo, and Tulare) plan to do the same as a part of jail  
2 expansion or construction plans; and

3 WHEREAS, It is extremely costly to use video visitation services remotely from one's  
4 home computer, about \$1/min on average, and many low-income families do not have access  
5 to computers or the internet; and

6 WHEREAS, According to a 2015 report by the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights,  
7 34% of families with incarcerated family members nationwide went into debt to pay for phone  
8 and visitation costs; and

9 WHEREAS, Throughout the state, there are people are being detained at the county  
10 level for longer periods of time, up to five years, due to realignment following the passage of  
11 California State Assembly Bill 109; and

12 WHEREAS, According to the Bureau of Justice, 53% all U.S. prisoners in 2007 were  
13 parents of one or more children under the age of 18; and

14 WHEREAS, According to the Department of Children, Youth, and their Families' 2011  
15 Community Needs Assessment, an estimated 16,196 San Francisco children had a parent in  
16 custody for some period of time in 2010 at San Francisco County Jails; and

17 WHEREAS, According to Project WHAT's 2016 report, "We're Here and Talking," 61%  
18 of San Francisco's children of incarcerated parents want more contact with their parents; and

19 WHEREAS, According to the Center for Youth Wellness, incarceration is one of the  
20 most adverse of childhood experiences; and

21 WHEREAS, Visitation is a mediating factor in the adverse effect of parental  
22 incarceration; and

23 WHEREAS, San Francisco has already taken a lead on this issue by maintaining in-  
24 person visitation at each county jail in the county in order to preserve family connections; and

25 WHEREAS, SB 1157 will ensure this model is followed statewide; and

1           WHEREAS, SB 1157 is sponsored by Project WHAT, the Women’s Foundation of  
2 California Women’s Policy Institute, Friends Committee on Legislation in California, Legal  
3 Services for Prisoners with Children, the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, the Prison Law  
4 Office, and CIVIC; and

5           WHEREAS, SB 1157 has gained unanimous support from the San Francisco Youth  
6 Commission, the Reentry Council, and the State Legislation Committee; now, therefore, be it

7           RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors supports the strengthening  
8 of family connections and the passage of SB 1157 (Mitchell); and, be it

9           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors directs the Clerk  
10 of the Board to transmit copies of this resolution to the author and co-authors, Senator  
11 Mitchell, Senator Hancock, and Assembly Member Weber.

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