

1 [Supporting the Rights of Workers at VCA San Francisco Veterinary Specialists]

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3 **Resolution supporting the rights of workers at VCA San Francisco Veterinary**  
4 **Specialists, San Francisco’s largest veterinary hospital.**

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6 WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco is responsible for ensuring the  
7 general welfare of animals, including pets, service animals and police dogs; and

8 WHEREAS, VCA San Francisco Veterinary Specialists (VCA-SFVS), located at 600  
9 Alabama Street, has been an important service provider for the City’s pet population,  
10 estimated to include 120,000 dogs, plus an unknown number of cats and other pets; and

11 WHEREAS, VCA operates over 800 animal care facilities throughout the U.S. and  
12 Canada; and

13 WHEREAS, VCA was purchased in 2017 for \$9.1 billion by Mars, Inc., one of  
14 America’s largest privately held corporations, with revenues of \$35 billion in 2017; and

15 WHEREAS, Mars is well-known for its M&Ms and Snickers candy, but has many  
16 diversified holdings, including pet care products and services, making it an important force in  
17 the rapidly growing and highly lucrative pet care industry; and

18 WHEREAS, Mars’ aggressive acquisition strategy has enabled it to become the  
19 nation’s largest veterinary service provider, controlling more than 2,000 facilities with the  
20 potential to exercise significant market pressure in some areas; and

21 WHEREAS, VCA-SFVS acted irresponsibly in May 2019 by suddenly closing its full-  
22 time oncology specialty care service with little or no notice to customers, despite objections  
23 from clients and workers that San Francisco pet-owners were losing the City’s only full-time  
24 oncology pet care facility; and

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1           WHEREAS, Roughly 80 employees at VCA-SFVS have repeatedly raised concerns  
2 about short staffing, high turnover and poor training, factors that impact safety and quality  
3 care for patients, clients and workers; and

4           WHEREAS, The company's refusal to address these and other concerns led workers  
5 to vote overwhelmingly in April 2018 to form a union and affiliate with the International  
6 Longshore and Warehouse Union; and

7           WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco has a long history of supporting  
8 struggles for social justice and workers' rights, especially the right of workers to form unions  
9 and secure contracts; and

10           WHEREAS, VCA-SFVS has subjected workers to a sustained anti-union campaign,  
11 including the hiring of anti-union consultants, anti-union attorneys, captive-audience meetings,  
12 and other tactics, some of which are ongoing and designed to thwart the rights of workers;  
13 and

14           WHEREAS, The company was charged on June 14, 2019, by the federal government  
15 with violating federal labor laws, triggering a voluntary walkout on June 27 by an  
16 overwhelming majority of workers, making it the first such strike in the nation by employees at  
17 a private-sector animal hospital; and

18           WHEREAS, Workers report that the company continues to engage in a range of anti-  
19 union activities, including retrogressive bargaining, union surveillance, and closing parts of the  
20 hospital in order to threaten and coerce employees, all of which are prohibited by the National  
21 Labor Relations Act; now, therefore, be it

22           RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors strongly supports veterinary  
23 workers in San Francisco who choose to form unions and negotiate contracts with employers  
24 in order to improve working conditions and promote quality of care for patients and clients;  
25 and, be it

1           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors hereby urges  
2 Mars, Inc., VCA, and VCA-SFVS to immediately halt all forms of anti-union conduct, embrace  
3 workers and their democratically elected union, and reach a prompt contract settlement; and,  
4 be it

5           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Board send a copy of this Resolution to  
6 the Presidents and corporate officers of Mars, Inc., VCA, and VCA-SFVS.

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