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Supervisor Catherine Stefani Passes Law Increasing Representation of Women in Public Realm
Requires representation of Women in 30 percent of Public Artwork, Street Names, and City-owned buildings; Statue of Maya Angelou to be Erected

SAN FRANCISCO — Today, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed Supervisor Catherine Stefani’s legislation to increase the representation of women in the public realm, beginning with a statue depicting Maya Angelou at the Main Library. The new law sets a policy of at least 30 percent representation of women in public works of art, street names, and names of City-owned buildings. The legislation, co-sponsored by President Cohen and Supervisors Brown, Kim, Ronen, Tang, and Fewer, passed unanimously.

“Across our nation, women are underrepresented not only in leadership positions but also in public spaces,” said Stefani. “The accomplishments of great women deserve to be recognized alongside the accomplishments of great men.”

Presently, San Francisco’s Arts Commission’s Civic Art Collection has 585 permanently sited works of art, including 87 statues. Of these 87, only two depict nonfictional women: the bust of Dianne Feinstein at City Hall and the statue of Florence Nightingale at Laguna Honda Hospital.

The 30 percent policy is aligned with an international movement to increase the representation of women on boards and in leadership roles by 2020, the 100th Anniversary of women receiving the right to vote under the 19th Amendment. Stefani believes the ultimate goal goes beyond the 30 percent target and stated she wants to see the City reach 50 percent representation.

“Children deserve to see role models they can relate to,” Stefani stated. “This law is a step forward to accomplishing this goal in our public spaces.”

Stefani’s legislation also institutes a fund to construct and maintain public artwork depicting women.

Former District 2 Supervisor Mark Farrell initially proposed the legislation, and his legislative aides Margaux Kelly and Kanishka Karunaratne Cheng spearheaded its design. Stefani revived the legislation and secured the final funds to construct the statue of Maya Angelou.