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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Supervisor Shamann Walton, District 10 - Natalie Gee, Chief of Staff, 415-619-0878
Gabriel Medina, Aspiring Citizens Advocate, 415-690-6992

*****PRESS RELEASE*****

*****SUPERVISOR SHAMANN WALTON INTRODUCES CHARTER AMENDMENT
REMOVING CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT FOR COMMISSIONS AND BOARDS*****

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - On this historic day coinciding with Cinco de Mayo, a day that represents resistance to colonialism, Supervisor Shamann Walton and President Norman Yee along with Immigrant Rights Advocates and Labor Activists announced a charter amendment for the November 2020 ballot that will allow all San Franciscans to serve on San Francisco commissions, boards, and advisory committees by removing the citizenship requirement. The Aspiring Citizens Charter Amendment currently has the unanimous support of all 11 Supervisors including Gordon Mar, Sandra Fewer, Hillary Ronen, Ahsha Safai, Aaron Peskin, Matt Haney, Rafael Mandelman, Dean Preston, and Catherine Stefani.

Currently, if a policy body was established in the City Charter or through legislation, it may include exceptions to age and residency requirements. Appointing officers or bodies can also waive residency requirements if an individual is qualified but do not reside in San Francisco. The Charter and any legislation cannot waive the U.S. Citizen requirement nor can any appointing officers and entities. This proposed charter amendment will remove the citizenship requirement allowing all qualified permanent residents, undocumented residents, and non-citizens to apply and serve on policy bodies in areas where most often they are affected but have no representation.

“I am honored to be part of this historical ordinance asking voters to allow ALL of our San Francisco residents the opportunity to serve on important advisory groups and commissions,” said Supervisor Shamann Walton. “We have residents who are paying taxes, utilizing our municipal services, and contributing to the San Francisco community but they are not represented in the very commissions, boards, or advisory committees that oversee and implement



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policies affecting them. This charter amendment will create inclusive and equitable opportunities for all San Franciscans.”

“This has been long overdue. Civic participation and community engagement are basic tenets of a vibrant democracy. A person’s citizenship status should not be a factor in whether or not a San Franciscan resident can serve. We need diversity in experiences and voices to help advise our policies. This barrier should be lifted to allow a more fair and accessible representation on our community advisory bodies,” states Supervisor Norman Yee, President of the Board of Supervisors.

“San Francisco and California continue to lead the country with innovative policies and practices that are truly inclusive of our diverse communities”, said Adrienne Pon, Executive Director of the Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA). “OCEIA and the Immigrant Rights Commission continue to support efforts that allow all city residents, regardless of immigration status, to engage, be informed, participate in meaningful ways, and contribute to our great city.”

“In 2016, San Francisco passed the “Immigrant Parent Right to Vote Act” in Proposition N,” said Sarah Souza, dreamer, and immigrant rights advocate. “As increased civic participation has a marked positive effect on the students of aspiring citizen parents. When students enter school, after they graduate, or even if they are still students, increased civic participation is not just better for them, but for all residents of San Francisco.”

This charter amendment will be introduced today at the full Board of Supervisors regular meeting. It will then be on a 30-day hold for the public to review before being heard in the Rules Committee and then back to the Board of Supervisors to vote. The last day to introduce any charter amendments is May 19, 2020. The last day to schedule a hearing in the Rules Committee will be July 6, 2020, and the Board has to vote by July 21, 2020, for the charter amendment to appear on the ballot. Charter Amendments must pass with a 50%+1 majority and require six members of the Board of Supervisors to be introduced.