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PRESS RELEASE

SUPERVISOR WALTON PROPOSES LAW TO BAN CITY TRAVEL TO STATES WITH VOTER RESTRICTION LAWS

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Board President and District 10 Supervisor Shamann Walton, along with co-sponsors Supervisors Ahsha Safai, Matt Haney, Myrna Melgar, and Catherine Stefani introduced legislation to expand Chapter 12X of the city’s administration code to include states that enact voter suppression laws.

Since the November 2020 General Election, many states have introduced laws to restrict voting rights across the country. Between January 1 and May 14, 2021, at least 14 states enacted 22 new laws that restrict access to the vote including making it harder for Americans to register to vote, stay on the voter rolls, and vote as compared to existing state law. Lawmakers across the country have introduced at least 389 restrictive bills in 48 states during the 2021 legislative session. There are at least 61 active bills with restrictive provisions moving through 18 state legislatures and 31 have passed at least in one chamber. [1]

On March 25, 2021, one of the most restrictive voter laws was enacted in the State of Georgia. This law limited vote by mail access, established strict voter ID requirements including on absentee ballots, limited local control over election processes through state intervention, eliminated ballot drop boxes, shortened the period between the election and any potential runoff elections, and established that it is a misdemeanor to provide food or water for voters waiting in line.

Supervisor Walton, along with his colleagues, requested the City Attorney to draft amendments to expand San Francisco’s Chapter 12X during the April 6, 2021, Board of Supervisors meeting. Chapter 12X currently prohibits city travel and contracting in states that allow discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals and states with anti-abortion laws. The proposed ordinance includes the expansion to Chapter 12X for states that enact the following voter restriction laws:



SHAMANN WALTON

華頌善

- Laws that do not allow same-day voting at a polling place if a voter goes to the wrong polling location.
- Laws that prevent voters without photo IDs from satisfying an identification requirement in some other manner, such as by submitting a signed and sworn affidavit.
- Laws limiting or prohibiting local election departments from mailing absentee ballots or absentee ballot applications to all voters.
- Laws that ban pre-paid postage for mail-in ballots.
- Laws that prohibit extension of voting hours if election problems arise.

Under this ordinance, the City and County of San Francisco will not require or pay for any of its employees or officers to travel to a state on the list, subject to certain exceptions necessary to enforce or comply with the City's legal or contractual obligations or to protect the public health, safety, or welfare. The City will also not enter into any contract with a contractor that has its headquarters in a state on the list or where any or all of the work on the contract will be performed in a state on the list.

“All of these states that are proposing and passing voter restrictions are making it clear that they want to make it harder for Black people, people of color, and low income communities throughout the country to exercise their right to vote,” said Supervisor Shamann Walton. “Throughout history, there have been recurring efforts to restrict votes of people of color and women in this country. These efforts to restrict the vote in 2021 is a threat to democracy as a whole.”

“We have states throughout our union that are actively passing laws to suppress voters from voting,” said Supervisor Ahsha Safai. “These efforts largely attack our low-income and marginalized communities which are largely composed of people of color. I believe extending Chapter 12X to prohibit San Francisco dollars from being spent in states that suppress others' right to vote is absolutely in alignment with our San Francisco values.”

“As a city, we should not be putting city funds through travel to states that actively create laws to make it harder to vote,” said Supervisor Matt Haney. “By adopting these amendments, San Francisco is taking a stand against voter restriction in this country.”

“San Francisco's spending power should not be investing in states that refuse to uphold the basic tenets of our democracy and dishonors the hard-fought victories of this nation's Voting Rights



SHAMANN WALTON

華頌善

movements. We hope that others will join this effort to resist against the continued disenfranchisement of voters,” stated Supervisor Myrna Melgar.

“Voting rights are being threatened all across the country, and we need to do everything we can to stand against it,” said Supervisor Catherine Stefani. “San Franciscans believe in free, fair, and open elections, and that means ensuring no voter faces intimidation or harassment.”

San Francisco’s existing [Chapter 12X](#) Administrative Code: Prohibiting City Travel and Contracting in States that Allow Discrimination already prohibits city travel and contracting in states that allow discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals and states with anti-abortion laws. This proposed ordinance will expand Chapter 12X to include laws that suppress voters from exercising their rights. There are currently 25 states on the [City’s state ban list](#) as of July 9, 2021.

[1] Berry, Patrick, et al. “Voting Laws Roundup: May 2021.” *Brennan Center for Justice*, 28 May 2021, www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/voting-laws-roundup-may-2021.

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