

City and County  
of San Francisco



Board of Supervisors,  
District 6

**MATT DORSEY**

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Dorsey pushes police recruitment bonus matching policy to avoid ‘catastrophic’ SFPD staffing shortage**

*Proposed resolution also urges the San Francisco Police Commission to develop a plan to achieve recommended staffing levels of 2,182 full-duty police officers within 48 months*

SAN FRANCISCO (Jan. 23, 2023) — Supervisor Matt Dorsey will introduce a resolution tomorrow urging San Francisco’s Department of Human Resources to adopt a policy to automatically match top police recruitment bonuses offered by competing jurisdictions in Northern California — many of which now significantly out-bid San Francisco for new and lateral hires of police officers. The resolution additionally urges the San Francisco Police Commission to develop a plan for reaching the recommended SFPD staffing level of 2,182 police officers within four years.

Dorsey’s move comes in the wake of alarming new data presented to police commissioners last week showing that the San Francisco Police Department’s full-duty staffing numbers have dropped to an historically unprecedented low point in recent decades: 1,537 police officers — with nearly 500 of them currently eligible for retirement.

“San Francisco is on the precipice of a potentially catastrophic police staffing shortage, and there are too many public safety problems we’ll be helpless to solve if we don’t start solving SFPD’s understaffing crisis first,” said Dorsey.

“Although recruitment bonuses are only one factor that prospective police officers and their families may consider when deciding where to pursue their law enforcement careers, they are a factor San Francisco should never voluntarily yield to competing jurisdictions,” Dorsey continued. “San Francisco has the largest municipal budget of any city in Northern California, and I think we must leverage that when it comes to competing for the best, most dedicated and diverse police force we can attract to protect and serve our city.”

A survey of police recruitment bonuses and starting salaries provided to the Board of Supervisors last year<sup>1</sup> showed a representative sampling of nearly two dozen law enforcement agencies statewide that provide more generous recruitment bonuses than San Francisco. At least four Bay Area cities — Alameda, Hayward, San Mateo and Daly City — offer both larger recruitment bonuses and more generous starting salaries than SFPD.

Dorsey’s 7-page resolution provides an overview of work by city policymakers over the last several years to adopt data-informed, workload-based metrics to calculate recommended police staffing levels, which 71 percent of city voters adopted into the City Charter in November 2020. To date, however, these efforts “have failed even to move in the right direction toward the recommended 2,182-officer minimum,” according to the resolution.

The proposed resolution includes a provision urging the San Francisco Police Commission “to develop a plan for achieving within 48 months” recommended full-duty police staffing levels, “and to report back to the Board of Supervisors in time for citywide elections in 2024 if a revised Charter Amendment is necessary.” The resolution additionally urges continued progress by SFPD, DHR and others to improve efficiencies in the recruiting and hiring of prospective officers. Note: the term “full duty” has historically been used in City Charter police staffing provisions to mean officers “who are fully able to perform police duties,” exclusive of those on temporary modified duty or on any of various forms of leave.

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<sup>1</sup> Response to Request for Information from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, SFPD, June 3, 2022, <https://acrobat.adobe.com/link/review?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:20df832b-2346-306a-8ff8-9ad11a06c10e>.