



Member, Board of Supervisors  
District 4

City and County of San Francisco

## **GORDON MAR**

**\*\*\* FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE \*\*\***

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### **Board of Supervisors Votes Unanimously to Place Public Health Emergency Leave on the June Ballot**

*San Francisco voters will have the chance to expand paid leave for San Francisco workers during public health crises and unhealthy air days -- permanently*

San Francisco - On Tuesday, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to place an initiative ordinance authored by Supervisor Gordon Mar on the June ballot to make Public Health Emergency Leave permanent. The benefit was previously available as an emergency measure, also authored by Supervisor Mar, granting some 200,000 San Franciscans an additional two weeks of paid leave in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“No person should have to choose between being able to pay their rent, or going to work with a contagious and deadly disease. No parent should have to choose between a paycheck or sending their sick child to school. By giving voters the chance to extend Public Health Emergency Leave for this and future emergencies, we will be showing that we’ve learned some lessons from this pandemic, and we’ll be more prepared for the next one,” said Mar.

“Essential workers have borne the brunt of this pandemic, and they need real protections to take care of themselves and their families. Public Health Emergency Leave is a common-sense policy to protect workers and workplaces,” said Kim Tavaglione, the Executive Director of the San Francisco Labor Council.

“This unprecedented public health crisis has exposed the social economic inequality that exists for our most vulnerable wage workers. I thank Supervisor Mar for his leadership on protecting our workers’ rights with the paid leave that they deserve to care for themselves and their families,” said Supervisor Connie Chan.

City workers and San Francisco employees of private companies with 100 or more workers would be covered by the benefit. Public Health Emergency Leave has a broad range of eligible uses, including if workers are sick, need to isolate, or have to stay home to take care of a family

member. In order to protect healthcare staffing levels, healthcare workers would be eligible for the additional leave only if they are sick or required to isolate. In addition to the exemption for small businesses, social enterprise nonprofits like Goodwill and YMCA would be exempt from the law.

If passed by voters, the additional paid leave would be available automatically during any future public health emergency, including an ongoing COVID-19 emergency, and replenish annually. The measure expands on the previous emergency legislation by including coverage for City workers and for unhealthy air quality days, like those in November 2018 when San Francisco had a stretch of consistent “unhealthy” or “very unhealthy” air quality due to smoke from the Camp Fire in nearby Butte County. According to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, exposure to unhealthy air can lead to both short and long term health problems, including lung irritation, greater severity of chronic lung diseases, changes in blood chemistry that contribute to heart attacks, increased susceptibility to pneumonia, and more. Public Health Emergency leave would help protect against these impacts by allowing outdoor workers with heart or lung conditions or who are seniors or pregnant to use paid leave during unhealthy air quality days.

Public Health Emergency Leave will now appear on the June ballot, where it requires approval from a majority of San Francisco voters to become law.

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