[Denouncing the Article, “Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War,” by J. Mark Ramseyer of the Japanese Legal Studies at Harvard Law School]

Resolution denouncing the article, “Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War,” written by J. Mark Ramseyer, of the Japanese Legal Studies at Harvard Law School, which denies the history of sexual enslavement of the hundreds of thousands of women by the Japanese Imperial Army during the Pacific War.

WHEREAS, It is acknowledged by the international community, historical records, historical research and primary testimony that between 200,000 to 500,000 young women and girls were forced into sexual servitude during World War II, these women are known as the “Comfort Women”; and

WHEREAS, These young women came from every country and territory under Japanese occupation including, China, Korea, the Philippines, Okinawa, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, East Timor and the Pacific Islands; and

WHEREAS, The average age of these girls and women was fifteen, but there were some as young twelve; and

WHEREAS, The vast majority of these women from China and Korea were forced to provide “sexual services” to the Japanese military, some were raped between 10-40 times on a regular basis and it is estimated that 75% - 90% died in captivity; and

WHEREAS, Mr. J. Mark Ramseyer’s article denies this historical truth and claims that women were not under force or coercion but entered into “fair contracts” under a “game theory” to provide sexual services to enemy Japanese soldiers; this novel theory, not backed by historical facts or any kind of credible documentation, is in line with other historical denialists; and
WHEREAS, “Comfort Woman” Survivor Yong Soo Lee, along with hundreds of scholars, economists, game theorists, as well the Korean Association of Harvard Law School have condemned Mr. Ramseyer for concocting a baseless assumption of who were the “comfort women”; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, the US House of Representatives passed House Resolution No. 121, a non-binding resolution requesting that Japan apologize for forcing women into sexual slavery during World War II; and

WHEREAS, The International Community, including the United Nations Human Rights Council, CEDAW, and human rights organizations such as, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch, have strongly condemned Japan and demanded that the government officially apologize to the survivors and their families; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed Resolution No. 218-13 in 2013, condemning then Osaka Mayor Toru Hashimoto for remarks denying the existence of the “Comfort Women” and demanding an apology from Japan; and

WHEREAS, In 2015, The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed Resolution No. 342-15, Urging the Establishment of a Memorial for "Comfort Women," urging the City and County of San Francisco to establish a memorial for "Comfort Women" and to educate the community about stopping global human trafficking of women and girls; and

WHEREAS, In 2017, The San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed Resolution No. 358-17, declaring September 22, 2017, as Comfort Women Day in the City and County of San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, Incidents of gender violence, sex trafficking, and femicide, are increasing in the world; and

WHEREAS, Historical Denialism of the “comfort women” system makes it ever more difficult to eradicate this violence against women; and
WHEREAS, Historical Denialism as evidenced in Mr. Ramseyer’s article also denies women survivors of sexual servitude the justice they deserve; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors denounces J. Mark Ramseyer’s article, “Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War” and urges the International Review of Law and Economics Journal to withdraw the article from circulation.
Resolution denouncing the article, “Contracting for Sex in the Pacific War,” written by J. Mark Ramseyer, of the Japanese Legal Studies at Harvard Law School, which denies the history of sexual enslavement of the hundreds of thousands of women by the Japanese Imperial Army during the Pacific War.

April 06, 2021 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED
Ayes: 11 - Chan, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani and Walton

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 4/6/2021 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution, not being signed by the Mayor within the time limit as set forth in Section 3.103 of the Charter, or time waived pursuant to Board Rule 2.14.2, became effective without her approval in accordance with the provision of said Section 3.103 of the Charter or Board Rule 2.14.2.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board