Resolution urging the Recreation and Park Commission to remove the name of Julius Kahn from the playground located at West Pacific Avenue and Spruce Street; and to rename the playground to recognize the value of immigrants and multicultural diversity to the City of San Francisco.

WHEREAS, In 1926, the playground at West Pacific Avenue and Spruce Street in the Presidio was named after former Congressman Julius Kahn, who represented San Francisco in the House of Representatives from 1899 to 1903, and from 1905 to 1924; and

WHEREAS, In 1902, Julius Kahn drafted and introduced United States House of Representatives Bill 13031, dubbed "the Kahn bill," which made permanent the Chinese Exclusion Act; and

WHEREAS, The Chinese Exclusion Act, originally signed into law in 1882, extended in 1892 and made permanent in 1902, excluded Chinese laborers from entering the United States, making it the first time in the country's history that a specific ethnic group was barred from entry; and

WHEREAS, The Chinese Exclusion Act also required Chinese people who were already in the United States to obtain certifications to re-enter the U.S. if they left, prohibited state and federal courts from granting Chinese persons citizenship, and required that each Chinese resident register and obtain a certificate of residence or else face deportation; and

WHEREAS, On the floor of the House of Representatives, Julius Kahn stated that Chinese people were "morally the most debased people on the face of the earth," that they "resorted . . . to trickery and duplicity to circumvent our laws," that "their daily intercourse with the Caucasian has not materially changed their customs or habits," that "gambling and
sensuality are the great vices of the Chinese . . . while murderous assaults, robberies, kidnapping, and blackmail are a frequent occurrence;" and

WHEREAS, Beyond Chinese exclusion, Julius Kahn pursued efforts to exclude other Asians from entry into the United States; and

WHEREAS, Julius Kahn declared at a speech in 1906, mere months before the United States and Japan entered into the 1907 Gentlemen’s Agreement, which effectively barred Japanese laborers from entering the U.S., “[W]e want the Japanese coolie kept out of our State. . . . I voice the unanimous sentiment of people of the Pacific Coast when I say that they do not want our naturalization law extended to the Japanese. The people of the Pacific Coast feel satisfied that he will always remain loyal to the Mikado, and that the oath of naturalization would be to him but a hollow mockery, an empty formality, signifying nothing;” and

WHEREAS, In 1910, Congressman Kahn sent a letter to the Commissioner General of Immigration, Daniel Keefe, writing of immigrants from India, "It must be remembered . . . that they come from a tropical country and from what I hear they cannot stand the rigors of a northern climate and on that account are bound to become burdens upon the communities to which they go;" and

WHEREAS, Julius Kahn expressed disdain toward Filipinos on the House floor in 1902, “There are probably 200,000 Chinese of the full blood in the Philippine Island. Those of mixed blood are many times more numerous, and it has invariably been asserted that these latter are a much more dangerous element, because they combine in themselves nearly all the vices of the Chinese and the Malays, with practically none of the virtues of either race;” and

WHEREAS, The Chinese Exclusion Act and other exclusionary policies had a harmful and dehumanizing effect on immigrants, their families and their communities, the repercussions of which are still felt to this day; and
WHEREAS, Julius Kahn promoted and institutionalized racist and exclusionary policies in the United States on behalf of San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, Our parks, which are a space for everyone in our diverse community, should not bear names of hatred or exclusion; and

WHEREAS, There is broad community support for the removal of Julius Kahn from the name of the playground; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco urges the Recreation and Park Commission to remove Julius Kahn from the name of “Julius Kahn Playground;” and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Recreation and Parks Commission to remove the name of Julius Kahn from the park after conducting a thorough community naming process; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the playground be renamed to recognize the multicultural diversity and value of immigrants to the City and County of San Francisco.
Resolution urging the Recreation and Park Commission to remove the name of Julius Kahn from the playground located at West Pacific Avenue and Spruce Street; and to rename the playground to recognize the value of immigrants and multicultural diversity to the City of San Francisco.

May 23, 2018 Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee - RECOMMENDED

June 05, 2018 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 11 - Breed, Cohen, Fewer, Kim, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, Sheehy, Stefani, Tang and Yee

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 6/5/2018 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 his 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