(Urging the Full Pardon of Salesh Prasad)

Resolution urging the Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor of California, to grant Salesh Prasad, a full pardon to allow him to remain in the United States with his family and to continue contributing to his community.

WHEREAS, The history of the City and County of San Francisco includes welcoming people of diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and national backgrounds. Immigrants are an integral part of our city and have made enormous positive contributions to San Francisco, where all families are valued; and

WHEREAS, Salesh ("Sal") Prasad is an immigrant from Fiji who has lived in California since he was 6 years old and came to the United States as a Lawful Permanent Resident with his family; and

WHEREAS, During his childhood, Mr. Prasad experienced domestic violence within his household and was sexually abused by an adult male acquaintance; and

WHEREAS, This abuse pushed Mr. Prasad to seek protection from gang members and to self-medicate with drugs and alcohol, causing his life to enter a downward spiral; and

WHEREAS, At age 22, Mr. Prasad took a person's life during an altercation, for which he is incredibly remorseful; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad was convicted for that crime and was sentenced to 20 years to life in state prison with the possibility of parole; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad was granted parole by the California Board of Parole Hearings in 2021, after serving about twenty-seven years of incarceration; and
WHEREAS, Those granted parole by the Board of Parole Hearings following an indeterminate life sentence represent a very low recidivism rate as evidenced by the 2019 Recidivism Report for Offenders Released from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, finding that less than one percent were convicted of felony crimes against persons after release; and

WHEREAS, Despite the challenging circumstances, Mr. Prasad began to heal and engage in self-inquiry focused on rehabilitation and change while incarcerated; and

WHEREAS, Through many years of therapy, Mr. Prasad healed from his abuse, transitioning from victim to survivor; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad has reflected on the harm that he caused and the incredible remorse he holds for his actions; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad became a leader not just in prison and ICE detention but in the broader Bay Area community. He strives to help other California immigrants and incarcerated people in order to fulfill his goal in life to help people rather than hurt them; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad had no rule violations in prison for 13 years prior to his hearing with the Parole Board in 2021, and has had no disciplinary violations whatsoever in ICE detention; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad’s leadership inside the facility goes beyond his support for other individuals detained, he has also spoken out about work conditions and safety to CalOSHA; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad fought to protect Californian families from the COVID-19 pandemic by encouraging his peers to connect with California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice’s Vaccine Education & Empowerment in Detention program. He helped other inmates get their vaccines and boosters; and
WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad also spoke in support of the VISION Act, which will prevent unnecessary transfers to ICE detention centers in California; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad improved conditions for other inmates and strengthened the human rights of all Californians by sharing his own experience with solitary confinement. Mr. Prasad continues to fight for the California Mandela Act on Solitary Confinement, which would limit confinement durations overall and end solitary confinement for vulnerable populations. He has fought not just to limit the misuse of solitary confinement for people like himself, but also for incarcerated people who have disabilities, who are pregnant, and who are elderly; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad also advocated for immigrant justice at a federal level through support of The New Way Forward Act, which seeks to end mandatory immigration detention, automatic deportation practices, and other provisions to enhance equity for communities of color in the country’s immigration laws; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad also evolved as an artist in prison, teaching himself to draw and specializing in custom greeting cards, especially cards with roses; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad additionally learned vocational trades while in prison, such as welding, engine work, roofing, plumbing, and carpentry; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad served his sentence and was released from prison at age 50, but in August of 2021, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation transferred him into ICE custody without one day of freedom; and

WHEREAS, Shortly after he was detained by ICE, Mr. Prasad’s mother passed away from COVID, and ICE denied him the opportunity to be released, even temporarily, to say goodbye or to attend her funeral; and
WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad then advocated against the visitation ban in ICE detention centers, which indefinitely separates detainees from seeing loved ones, and was quoted in The Bakersfield Californian around this advocacy; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad has been detained by ICE for more than ten months, and remains there today; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad applied for deferral of removal under the Convention Against Torture because he fears he will be tortured if deported to Fiji, but an immigration judge denied his application and ordered his deportation; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ individuals in Fiji face discrimination, rejection from their families and society, and hate crimes; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad’s personal growth, community service, and strong ties to the community clearly demonstrate the efforts he has made to rebuild his life and give back to others; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad plans to provide mentorship to other survivors of childhood sexual abuse once he is released; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad’s transitional housing should he be released will be in San Francisco; and

WHEREAS, the San Francisco Public Defender’s Office houses a deportation defense unit and currently represents Mr. Prasad; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad is a member of the LGBTQ+ community, and Mr. Prasad has the support of many Bay Area community organizations, including Rainbow Beginnings, a mutual aid organization in San Francisco dedicated to assisting LGBTQ+ migrants, The Asian Prisoner Support Committee, The Asian Law Caucus, The California Collaborative for Immigrant Justice, and The Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity; and
WHEREAS, Mr. Prasad has additional support from the Queer Detainee
Empowerment Project, Kern Welcoming and Extending Solidarity to Immigrants, and
Freedom for Immigrants; and
WHEREAS, Governor Newsom is originally from San Francisco, was Mayor of San
Francisco for seven years, and continues to have deep ties to San Francisco; and
WHEREAS, If Mr. Prasad is granted a pardon by Governor Newsom, he will no
longer be deportable and will be able to remain with his family and contribute his skills and
gifts to the Bay Area community; now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco opposes the removal of
Salesh Prasad from the United States; and, be it
FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges
Governor Newsom to grant Mr. Prasad a full pardon in order for him to remain lawfully in
the United States with his family; and, be it
FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution shall be sent to Governor
Newsom, other Federal and State Representatives in San Francisco, and Mr. Prasad's
counsel for appropriate distribution.
Resolution urging the Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor of California, to grant Salesh Prasad, a full pardon to allow him to remain in the United States with his family and to continue contributing to his community.

July 12, 2022 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 7/12/2022 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