[Urging Urgent Homelessness Policy Changes]

Resolution urging the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to implement urgent policy changes to serve pregnant individuals, families living in Single Room Occupancy units or doubled-up families; and urging the Department to pursue additional policy changes in coordination with the Board of Supervisors.

WHEREAS, The City and County of San Francisco’s definition of homelessness includes individuals and families living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide a temporary living arrangement; with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground; “doubled-up” in the homes of family or friends; staying in jails, hospitals, or rehabilitation facilities; and families living in Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units; and,

WHEREAS, The City’s annual homelessness Point-in-Time Count uses the federal U.S. Housing and Urban Development or HUD definition of homelessness in this Count, which does not include persons who are “doubled-up” in the homes of family or friends; staying in jails, hospitals or rehabilitation facilities; and families living in Single Room Occupancy (SRO); and

WHEREAS, Historically, the City has made an effort to include individuals in these living situations by surveying known jails, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities and incorporating San Francisco Unified School District data to identify individuals believed to otherwise be homeless and has included this data in an Appendix to the 2019 Point-in-Time Count, but has not included this data in the body of the report due to an updated methodology; and,
WHEREAS, Using the HUD methodology, the 2019 Point-in-Time Count of the homeless population in San Francisco revealed a 17% increase in homelessness from 2017 to 2019; and the San Francisco methodology revealed a 30% increase from 2017 to 2019; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing ("HSH") has responded with strategic investments in problem-solving and shelter, including for the growing population of individuals living in their vehicles; and

WHEREAS, The homelessness crisis in San Francisco necessitates additional urgent action and policy changes at times to respond to changing conditions on the ground and within the population of individuals struggling with homelessness; and

WHEREAS, The number of unsheltered families has remained relatively stable, unlike other subpopulations counted in the semi-annual Point-in-Time Count; and

WHEREAS, The 2019 Point-in-Time Count identified 612 persons in 201 families experiencing homelessness, like the 601 persons in 190 families identified in 2017; and

WHEREAS, Data from the National 2017 Point-in-Time Count suggests that nationwide 33% of all people experiencing homelessness are persons in families, of whom 90% were sheltered; and

WHEREAS, The official Point-in-Time Count does not account for all homeless families due in large part to the fact that many families' condition of homelessness is not readily detectable or visible, and because the Point-in-Time Count excludes data on families living in SRO units or doubled-up households, meaning a household having one or more adults in addition to the head of household and spouse or partner, such as an adult child living at home, two related or unrelated families residing together, or a parent living with an adult child; and
WHEREAS, According to the most recent data, in 2014, the San Francisco Unified School District reported that approximately 60% of homeless students were living in doubled-up households; and

WHEREAS, According to the most recent SRO Families Report in 2015, 699 households with minor children were residing in SROs; and

WHEREAS, As of May 2019, the number of homeless students reported by the San Francisco Unified School District had reached 2,293; and

WHEREAS, Children in families experiencing homelessness, including those in SROs and living in doubled-up conditions, face increased incidences of illness and are more likely to have emotional and behavioral problems than children with stable living accommodations; and

WHEREAS, Currently, families living in SROs or in doubled-up housing situations do not meet the eligibility criteria that determines a household’s eligibility for shelter, housing, or other services through the City’s Family Coordinated Entry System unless they have to leave their housing unit immediately or have been asked to leave within the next 14 days and have nowhere else to go; and

WHEREAS, By revising the intake forms and questionnaires at access points, the City could qualify these families for eligibility and equitably assess their needs and vulnerability; and

WHEREAS, These changes would also ensure that the aggregate needs of all members of a household are assessed and factored into the family’s overall prioritization score, as opposed to just the needs of the head-of-household which currently determines an entire family’s prioritization score; and

WHEREAS, Current policy states that pregnant individuals can only access the homeless family shelter and services system through the City’s Family Coordinated Entry system upon arriving at the third trimester of pregnancy; and
WHEREAS, The third trimester is often too late to prevent long and short-term fetal complications and preterm labor; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors recognizes that multiple other policies and practices being utilized to address the needs of individuals and families struggling with homelessness and unstable housing are necessary to effectively address continuing issues including, but not limited to, low-barrier programming for homeless youth, official identification prerequisites to qualify for aid, the length of stay in Navigation Centers and other shelters; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to establish, publicize, and consistently apply a policy that guarantees that homeless pregnant individuals are eligible for family homeless services and housing through Family Coordinated Entry at any point in their pregnancy by extending the definition of family homelessness to include homeless individuals with a confirmed pregnancy that do not have any other minor children; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to adhere to San Francisco’s health data-driven established definition of homelessness established by Board Resolution No. 997-01 which includes SRO and doubled-up families; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to modify San Francisco Coordinated Entry Standards and assessments to adhere to a consistent definition of homelessness that includes families living in Single Room Occupancy hotels and doubled-up housing situations as eligible households able to access shelter and other services through City’s Family Coordinated Entry system; and, be it

Supervisors Yee; Haney, Fewer, Peskin, Brown, Stefani, Walton
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to work to ensure that families living in SROs or doubled-up are eligible for more appropriately-sized housing options; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to modify the calculation of a family’s prioritization score under Family Coordinated Entry to ensure that the aggregate needs of all members of a household are assessed and factored into the family’s overall prioritization score, as opposed to solely considering the needs of the head-of-household; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors affirms the independent authority of the Local Homelessness Coordinating Board to develop its own public meeting agendas in order to meaningfully respond to these and other policy concerns related to the City’s homelessness response system; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors strongly supports the Mayor’s commitment to meet monthly with representative service providers with expertise and an established history of serving homeless individuals and families to address these and other policy concerns related to the homelessness response system; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to coordinate with the Mayor’s office, homeless stakeholders, and the Board of Supervisors to address the homelessness crisis and ongoing policy concerns to improve access to, and efficacy of, the City and County of San Francisco’s homelessness response system.
Resolution urging the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing to implement urgent policy changes to serve pregnant individuals, families living in single room occupancy units or doubled-up families; and urging the Department to pursue additional policy changes in coordination with the Board of Supervisors.

September 03, 2019 Board of Supervisors - AMENDED, AN AMENDMENT OF THE WHOLE BEARING SAME TITLE
Ayes: 11 - Brown, Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

September 03, 2019 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED AS AMENDED
Ayes: 11 - Brown, Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED AS AMENDED on 9/3/2019 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