[Condemning the United States Department of Agriculture’s Proposed Rule Change that Threatens Food Security]

Resolution condemning a proposed rule change by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that would end categorical eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits and cause more than 3,000,000 people nationwide to be more food insecure; urging the USDA to withdraw said rule change; and asking the Human Services Agency to explain the negative effects such a change will cause.

WHEREAS, Food insecurity is a significant and growing concern in San Francisco County; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Supervisors have declared food as a basic human right and resolved to end hunger in the city by 2020; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Food Security Task Force reports in 2018 that 226,520 people were residents with income below 200% of the federal poverty level that are high-risk of food insecurity; and

WHEREAS, Food insecurity results in poorer physical, mental, and emotional health outcomes for children which follow them into adulthood and manifests in chronic health conditions; and

WHEREAS, The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), is administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), provides food-purchasing assistance for low- and no-income individuals and families through state operated agencies and administered through county operated agencies; and

WHEREAS, SNAP is known and operated as CalFresh in California, which provided nutritional benefits to approximately 3,938,253 or about 10% of Californians through county agencies; and
WHEREAS, The Department of Human Services is the county agency for the administration of public social services, including CalFresh, which served 59,410 or about 6.7% of San Francisco residents as of July 2019; and

WHEREAS, CalFresh and other nutrition supplement benefits are instrumental in decreasing poverty and unemployment, and thereby contributing to increased economic stability and mental, physical, and emotional health of families; and

WHEREAS, The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 established current regulations and protocol for the administration of SNAP, as well as the authority for the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture to determine standards by which the Secretary will judge eligibility for SNAP; and

WHEREAS, Judgement on eligibility changes that result in policy changes that reduce or discourage eligibility for CalFresh or any social benefit program results in increased hunger, illness, social instability, and crime; and

WHEREAS, On July 24, 2019, the United States Department of Agriculture proposed new rules for SNAP, declaring that current eligibility screening was not robust and did not move families toward self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, The proposed rule change would significantly reduce or current definitions of categorical eligibility, where qualification for certain state programs would result in automatic qualification for SNAP; and

WHEREAS, Economic realities in California and other states require states to deem individuals and families in need “categorically eligible” for assistance programs in order to meet nutrition needs given the higher costs of living and the federal government’s inadequate measurement of poverty; and
WHEREAS, The rule change would result in more than 3,000,000 people and families losing their food supplement, increasing hunger, stress, and all other negative effects of food insecurity; and

RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco condemns the rule change proposed by the United States Department of Agriculture; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco urges the United States Department of Agriculture to rethink and cancel the enactment of said rule change; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco reaffirms its commitment to food security as a human right; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco condemns all policy changes that make it harder for people to feed their families; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco will continue to work toward food security despite the federal government’s decision to do otherwise; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco urges the Director of the Human Services Agency to submit a comprehensive comment to the United States Department of Agriculture and the community describing the effects of the rule change on the food security efforts; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this Resolution be sent to the Director of the Human Services Agency, Federal Representatives in San Francisco, United States Secretary of Agriculture, and to the United States Department of Agriculture.
Resolution condemning a proposed rule change by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that would end categorical eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits and cause more than 3,000,000 people nationwide to be more food insecure; urging the USDA to withdraw said rule change; and asking the Human Services Agency to explain the negative effects such a change will cause.

September 24, 2019 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED
Ayes: 11 - Brown, Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

File No. 190954

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 9/24/2019 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

Unsigned
London N. Breed
Mayor

10/4/2019
Date Approved

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

10/4/2019
Date