[Condemning Antisemitic and Homophobic Attacks on Senator Scott Wiener]

Resolution condemning the antisemitic and homophobic attacks on Senator Scott Wiener; and condemning social media platforms for failing to intervene and protect their users from hate speech.

WHEREAS, San Francisco’s national identity as a bastion of progressive values and diversity of elected representation have historically made its public servants the target of racist, homophobic and misogynistic hate speech, violent threats and xenophobia; and

WHEREAS, The San Francisco Bay Area is also the regional hometown of several tech companies that operate lucrative and largely unregulated social media platforms, including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, that use algorithms to target messaging and user activity, but have done little to intervene and crack down on the dissemination of incendiary lies, hate speech and doxing by right-wing abusers of these high-profile information sites, which has caused irreparable damage to individuals and vulnerable communities of concern; and

WHEREAS, During August 2020, Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) became the target of violent, homophobic, and antisemitic attacks organized, in part, by a right-wing internet conspiracy group called QAnon; and

WHEREAS, According to the New York Times, QAnon “is the umbrella term for a sprawling set of internet conspiracy theories that allege, falsely, that the world is run by a cabal of Satan-worshiping pedophiles who are plotting against [President Donald] Trump while operating a global child sex-trafficking ring,” whose members frequently engage in all manner of hate speech, including antisemitism and homophobia; and
WHEREAS, Senator Wiener estimates that he has received more than 10,000 hateful attacks, including more than 1,000 death threats against him and his staff; and

WHEREAS, These attackers have engaged in a practice known as “doxxing,” which involves leaking private personal information to the public, making the danger presented by these threats increasingly real and terrifying; and

WHEREAS, The attacks frequently refer to Senator Wiener as a “Jewish pedophile,” reference “Zionism” or “Zionists,” and feature images of Senator Wiener that have been edited to include visual tropes that were often used in antisemitic Nazi-era propaganda; and

WHEREAS, The frequency and intensity of these attacks have increased as right-wing leaders such as radio personality Rush Limbaugh, Senator Ted Cruz, and Donald Trump, Jr. have used their broad platforms to spread misinformation and incite these hateful attacks against Senator Wiener; and

WHEREAS, Rush Limbaugh purposefully enflamed his listeners on August 30, 2020, by saying “pedophilia is now legal in California,” - a claim that is demonstrably false and easily disproven; and

WHEREAS, On September 3, 2020, Senator Ted Cruz tweeted “Dems believe we need more adults having sex with children,” including a link with a photo of Senator Wiener alleging that he is trying to normalize pedophilia; and

WHEREAS, On the same day, Donald Trump, Jr. tweeted that Senator Wiener was pandering “to the wishes of pedophiles and child rapists”; and

WHEREAS, The attacks on Senator Wiener are part of a growing and extremely dangerous white supremacist movement, which increasingly targets immigrants; Jewish and Muslim individuals and other religious minorities; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex (LGBTI) individuals; and
WHEREAS, The United States Department of State reported that white supremacist
terrorism is on the rise around the world; and

WHEREAS, Domestically, this kind of online harassment can serve as a red flag to
real-world violence, as was the case in the 2015 attack on a Black church in Charleston,
South Carolina; the 2017 fatal car attack in Charlottesville, Virginia; the 2018 shooting at the
Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and the 2019 shooting at the Wal-Mart in
El Paso, Texas; and

WHEREAS, White supremacist hate groups use popular social media platforms like
Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter to spread misinformation, radicalize those they
engage with, and inspire acts of violence; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors stands with the Jewish and
LGBTI communities to denounce antisemitism and homophobia directed at Senator Scott
Wiener; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors denounces hate
speech, threats of violence, and white supremacist domestic terrorism in all its forms and
wherever it occurs, including online; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors believes
social media platforms are complicit in aiding and abetting the spread of white
supremacist violence domestically and worldwide, and that those companies have a
responsibility to protect the safety of their users and the public, which they continuously
fail to meet; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors urges all social
media platforms to take their duty to protect the public seriously and prevent users from
engaging in hate speech, white supremacy, or threats of violence; and condemns these
social media platforms for failing to intervene and protect their users from hate speech; and,
be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors directs the Clerk
of the Board to send a copy of this resolution to the Chief Executive Officers of Facebook,
Twitter, YouTube and Instagram upon its final adoption.
Resolution condemning the antisemitic and homophobic attacks on Senator Scott Wiener, and condemning social media platforms for failing to intervene and protect their users from hate speech.

September 22, 2020 Board of Supervisors - CONTINUED
   Ayes: 11 - Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

September 29, 2020 Board of Supervisors - AMENDED, AN AMENDMENT OF THE WHOLE BEARING NEW TITLE
   Ayes: 11 - Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

September 29, 2020 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED AS AMENDED
   Ayes: 11 - Fewer, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Peskin, Preston, Ronen, Safai, Stefani, Walton and Yee

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED AS AMENDED on 9/29/2020 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board

Signed
10/09/2020
Mayor
London N. Breed
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

10/09/2020  
Date

File No.  
201072