Resolution urging the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the San Francisco Fort Miley Department of Veteran Affairs to acknowledge the disparities of physical and psychological health and medical care among transgender, black transgender, and repatriated veterans; and to develop transformative strategies for increasing access to these necessary veteran affairs benefits.

WHEREAS, Veterans of the United States Uniformed Services may be eligible for a variety of Department of Veterans Affairs programs and services, and many subpopulations of veterans, such as transgender and immigrant veterans, face more discrimination when trying to receive these benefits than others; and

WHEREAS, Over 134,000 American veterans are reported to be transgender, and over 15,000 transgender individuals currently serve in the military; and

WHEREAS, Despite the fact that they have recently been completely acknowledged by the US Military, the Department of Veteran Affairs, and Congress, non cis-gender veterans continue to face discrimination in accessing proper health care and benefits; and

WHEREAS, Black transgender veterans experience higher rates of discrimination, unmet health care needs, lack of access to VA compensation, and housing insecurity than their non-black counterparts; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs recently approved payment of fees associated with gender confirmation surgery for veterans, as well as declared a commitment to providing quality treatment to transgender veterans; and

WHEREAS, While the Veterans Health Administration aims to address issues of inequality for transgender veterans, there are still some concerns with care administration,
adequate staff and physician training, and the provision of holistic services for transgender
veterans' specific healthcare needs; and

WHEREAS, Immigrant veterans subject to deportation also face barriers to accessing
their health care benefits, and today, around 530,000 veterans were born outside of the
United States, accounting for about 3% of all 18.6 million veterans of the US Military; and

WHEREAS, Following the establishment of the Violent Crime Control and Law
Enforcement Act, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has developed
policies for handling cases of noncitizen veterans who may be subject to removal from the
United States but does not consistently adhere to those policies and does not consistently
identify and track such veterans, which has led to the deportation of non-citizen veterans from
the United States at unprecedented rates; and

WHEREAS, As of July 2021, The Biden administration announced with the Veteran
Deportation Prevention and Reform Act that it will formalize a new procedure that will allow
immigrants who served in the military but were later deported to lawfully return to the United
States for repatriation; and

WHEREAS, When deported veterans return to the United States, many of them lack
the essential support structures - such as medical care, housing, and other resources - that
they need to succeed in society; and

WHEREAS, Honorably discharged veterans who are deported are unable to access
vital government benefit programs such as those that provide educational opportunities and
health care even though they are still eligible for those benefits, and are required to attend
hearings and meetings in the United States in order to regain access to these benefits,
leaving these veterans without services for extended periods of time which may have adverse
effects on their health and outcomes; and
WHEREAS, Both transgender and immigrant veterans face inequity within the health care and veteran services system on the basis of their identity or citizenship status; and

WHEREAS, A consequence of the intersection of serving in the Military and experiencing discrimination when returning home or retiring from service in the field is increased psychological suffering which leads to an increased risk of suicide among veterans experiencing discrimination; and

WHEREAS, Over the previous decade, the United States has made some headway in lowering the daily rate of successful suicide among veterans from 22 to 18 rounded (17.2 statistically) per day, however, the numbers are still far too high; and

WHEREAS, The Fort Miley Department of Veteran Affairs sets out to provide general medical, surgical, and psychiatric services for veterans in San Francisco, many of which belong to these vulnerable veteran populations; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors urges the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the San Francisco Fort (Ft.) Miley Department of Veteran Affairs to acknowledge the disparities of physical and psychological health and medical care among transgender, Black transgender, and repatriated veterans, and to develop transformative strategies for increasing access to these necessary VA benefits; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board urges the Ft. Miley Department of Veteran Affairs Director to demonstrate how their faculty is providing discrimination free access to its facilities for Transgender Veterans, and specifically, Black transgender veterans; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City of San Francisco partners with the Veterans Congressional Budget Office and the Ft. Miley Department of Veteran Affairs to create a marketing strategy for combatting suicide among veterans; and, be it

Supervisors Haney; Preston
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors recognizes every United States veteran’s right to medical care and access regardless of racial or gender identity and citizenship status.
Resolution urging the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the San Francisco Fort Miley Department of Veteran Affairs to acknowledge the disparities of physical and psychological health and medical care among transgender, black transgender, and repatriated veterans; and to develop transformative strategies for increasing access to these necessary veteran affairs benefits.

November 16, 2021 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED

Ayes: 9 - Chan, Haney, Mandelman, Mar, Melgar, Peskin, Preston, Stefani and Walton
Excused: 1 - Ronen
Absent: 1 - Safai

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 11/16/2021 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