Resolution supporting California State Senate Bill 1157, authored by Senator Mitchell, to strengthen family connections in order to ensure families have access to in-person visits with loved ones incarcerated in county jails.

WHEREAS, The parent-child relationship is a crucial social bond; and

WHEREAS, Legislation introduced by state Senator Holly Mitchell would preserve meaningful visitation rights for people in local correctional facilities, juvenile halls, juvenile homes, ranches, and camps, as well as private detention facilities contracting with counties by clarifying that their right to a minimum amount of visitation refers to in-person visits, which cannot be replaced with video visits; and

WHEREAS, California State Senate Bill 1157 (SB1157) will help strengthen family connections by ensuring access to in-person visits between incarcerated and detained persons and their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Providing access to visitation improves public safety, reduces recidivism, and reduces negative impacts on loved ones, especially children whose loved ones are incarcerated or detained; and

WHEREAS, A 2015 Prison Policy Initiative report showed that 74% of county jails across the country that implemented video visitation ended up eliminating in-person visitation; and

WHEREAS, At least five California counties (Kings, Napa, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Solano) have eliminated in-person visitation in at least one of their jails, meaning families are only able to visit their loved ones through a computer screen, and two counties (Imperial and Placer) have severely restricted in-person visitation since adopting video visitation, and
three counties (Orange, San Mateo, and Tulare) plan to do the same as a part of jail expansion or construction plans; and

WHEREAS, It is extremely costly to use video visitation services remotely from one's home computer, about $1/min on average, and many low-income families do not have access to computers or the internet; and

WHEREAS, According to a 2015 report by the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, 34% of families with incarcerated family members nationwide went into debt to pay for phone and visitation costs; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the state, there are people are being detained at the county level for longer periods of time, up to five years, due to realignment following the passage of California State Assembly Bill 109; and

WHEREAS, According to the Bureau of Justice, 53% all U.S. prisoners in 2007 were parents of one or more children under the age of 18; and

WHEREAS, According to the Department of Children, Youth, and their Families’ 2011 Community Needs Assessment, an estimated 16,196 San Francisco children had a parent in custody for some period of time in 2010 at San Francisco County Jails; and

WHEREAS, According to Project WHAT’s 2016 report, “We’re Here and Talking,” 61% of San Francisco’s children of incarcerated parents want more contact with their parents; and

WHEREAS, According to the Center for Youth Wellness, incarceration is one of the most adverse of childhood experiences; and

WHEREAS, Visitation is a mediating factor in the adverse effect of parental incarceration; and

WHEREAS, San Francisco has already taken a lead on this issue by maintaining in-person visitation at each county jail in the county in order to preserve family connections; and

WHEREAS, SB 1157 will ensure this model is followed statewide; and
WHEREAS, SB 1157 is sponsored by Project WHAT, the Women's Foundation of California Women's Policy Institute, Friends Committee on Legislation in California, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, the Prison Law Office, and CIVIC; and

WHEREAS, SB 1157 has gained unanimous support from the San Francisco Youth Commission, the Reentry Council, and the State Legislation Committee; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors supports the strengthening of family connections and the passage of SB 1157 (Mitchell); and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit copies of this resolution to the author and co-authors, Senator Mitchell, Senator Hancock, and Assembly Member Weber.

Supervisor Breed
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Resolution supporting California State Senate Bill 1157, authored by Senator Mitchell, to strengthen family connections in order to ensure families have access to in-person visits with loved ones incarcerated in county jails.

May 24, 2016 Board of Supervisors - ADOPTED
Ayes: 11 - Avalos, Breed, Campos, Cohen, Farrell, Kim, Mar, Peskin, Tang, Wiener and Yee

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED on 5/24/2016 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 his 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