



Hello Task Force Members,

My name is Audrey Joseph, and I was a founding Commissioner of the San Francisco Entertainment Commission. I was appointed by Mayor Willie Brown to the entertainment industry seat and subsequently reappointed by Mayor Newsom and Mayor Lee for additional four-year terms. I served as Commission President during its formative years, including years two, three, and six, and as Vice President in my remaining years.

I bring more than five decades of experience in the entertainment industry. Over the course of my career, I have owned and operated major nightclubs such as Club Universe and Club Townsend, produced countless large-scale events including the main stage of San Francisco Pride, and co-founded the celebrated venue Mezzanine. I have also served as Director of Events at the SF Armory and produced numerous gatherings for San Francisco's LGBTQ community. Beyond venues and events, I was an early pioneer in sound regulation, trained inspectors during the department's foundational years, and held leadership seats on the Commission from its inception until 2016. This deep and varied background informs my perspective on why a Commission of this type is essential for San Francisco.

The Entertainment Commission provides rules and regulations such as the Good Neighbor Policy and has the means to enforce them. Under the Commission's guidance, the entertainment industry's economic impact grew substantially, and the model was emulated by cities across the country and abroad. The Commission created a transparent forum where all stakeholders—operators, neighbors, and city agencies—could raise concerns and resolve conflicts. Its mediation process proved highly effective, transforming neighborhood disputes into productive collaborations.

When the Commission was created, nightlife faced significant challenges with violence. By placing enforceable conditions on permits, requiring trained staff, consistent management oversight, and security compliance, the Commission helped reduce violence and improve safety citywide. While we do not regulate alcohol directly, permit conditions addressing staff training and managerial oversight created safeguards against alcohol over service and its associated risks. Within a few years, nightlife-related violence dropped considerably.

San Francisco is known worldwide as a music city, and the "San Francisco Sound" remains a global cultural export. Protecting this industry requires an open, ongoing dialogue among stakeholders, and the Commission has provided exactly that. Before its creation, the police alone issued permits, often without guidance or consistency. The Commission introduced expertise, transparency, and accountability, while retaining the existing police code structure.

Importantly, the Commission draws its strength from the expertise of its members. Today it is composed of two entertainment industry representatives, two neighborhood representatives, a law enforcement representative currently held by an active member of the San Francisco Police Department, a planning or zoning representative, and a health representative who has worked extensively with staff on critical projects including overdose prevention. This structure ensures that decisions are informed by diverse, real-time

perspectives across public safety, community health, neighborhood quality of life, and entertainment industry needs. Commissioners bring knowledge and ask questions that no single permit officer could replicate, creating conditions that are both thoughtful and enforceable.

The Commission ensures that conditions on permits are tailored, enforceable, and responsive to community concerns. Its absence would disrupt the balance we have worked hard to create between operators, residents, and city agencies. Eliminating this body would not only jeopardize safety and community trust but also threaten the vitality and economic impact of San Francisco's entertainment sector.

I urge you to preserve the Entertainment Commission as an essential regulator and convener. I welcome any questions from Prop E Commissioners.

Respectfully,
Audrey Joseph