



MEMORANDUM

To: Commission Streamlining Task Force

Through: Susie Smith, Deputy Director, Policy, Planning, and Public Affairs

From: Trent Rhorer, Executive Director, Human Services Agency
Kelly Dearman, Executive Director, Department of Disability and Aging Services

Date: October 8, 2025

Subject: Opposition to the combining of the Human Services Commission and Disability and Aging Services Commission

We appreciate the opportunity to share our concerns about the proposal to consolidate the Human Services Commission and the Disability and Aging Services Commission into a single governing body. We respectfully urge the Task Force to preserve the current two-commission structure to ensure strong, effective, and legally compliant oversight of both divisions.

While we support the City's efforts to improve efficiency, the current two-commission structure reflects essential legal, operational, and programmatic differences that must be preserved. The Human Services Agency includes two distinct departments—the Department of Benefits and Family Support (BFS) and the Department of Disability and Aging Services (DAS)—each with its own mission, budget, leadership, and service model. The BFS and DAS Executive Directors act independently, each appointed by the Mayor. No other City commission oversees multiple independent departments, and creating such a precedent would be both impractical and ineffective.

Each commission plays a vital role: the Human Services Commission oversees safety net programs for children, families, and individuals, while the Disability and Aging Services Commission oversees services for older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans. Importantly, the DAS Commission serves as the state-mandated oversight body for the City's Area Agency on Aging, reviewing and approving the mandated Area Plan Update for the California Department of Aging. These departments operate under distinct regulatory frameworks and serve communities with unique needs, requiring targeted expertise and oversight.

Merging the commissions would weaken that oversight by diluting the subject matter expertise and population-specific understanding each body contributes. Expecting a single commission to effectively encompass the breadth of expertise required across all populations served by the agency would present a significant administrative and governance challenge. Voters affirmed the importance of population-specific focus by established designated seats for older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans with the passage of 2016's Proposition I.

Further, these systems operate under different regulatory frameworks that require knowledge and expertise to effectively fulfill oversight requirements. State law also requires a



designated oversight body for the Area Agency on Aging that benefits from expertise in aging issues and systems of care. Eliminating the Disability and Aging Services Commission would compromise the City's compliance with this requirement. Asking the Board of Supervisors to assume that role is not practical given the volume and complexity of responsibilities involved.

We support clarifying roles through updates to the Administrative Code particularly to reflect that DAS serves as the Area Agency on Aging and that its commission fulfills the state oversight requirement. However, any attempt to consolidate the two commissions would ultimately reduce the quality of oversight, risk legal noncompliance, and burden commissioners with responsibilities beyond the scope of a single body.