

From: [REDACTED]
To: [commissionstreamlining](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Preserve the Governance Commission on the Status of Women's Authority
Date: Monday, October 13, 2025 8:40:04 PM

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Dear Commission Streamlining Task Force,

I write to implore you to keep the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women as an independent body with full governance authority. From 2015 to 2021, I had the pleasure of serving women and girls, and the City of San Francisco as a whole, as a policy analyst for the Department on the Status of Women. In this time, I witnessed the tremendous vision, leadership, and impact of the San Francisco Commission on the Status of Women. Reducing it to an advisory committee would take away its power and silence community voices. It would also undermine the Commission's ability to advocate effectively for women, girls, and gender-expansive people, especially at a time when those voices are facing attacks on their rights, safety, opportunity, and representation.

Time and again, San Francisco has made history by leading the way for civil and human rights, the environment, and . The City established one of the earliest Commissions on the Status of Women in the country, and it became the first city to create a Department to enact the Commission and City's goal of advancing and ensuring equity for all San Franciscans irrespective of gender. From safe reporting for sex workers to appropriate lactation accommodations, I have personally witnessed how the Commission identified emerging issues which then guided the Department to conduct research, fund services, and develop projects that later informed groundbreaking legislation passed by the Board of Supervisors, the State of California, and other states. The Commission regularly engages community and City leaders alike in understanding the needs and experience of women and girls of all ages, backgrounds, and life experiences. As the Commission shone a light on vulnerable populations (e.g. women in carceral settings, girls, older women, and women in the Police Department), the Department followed by drafting reports, helping expand services, and promoting the adoption of best practices. Working together, the Commission and Department on the Status of Women led the way for improved conditions not only for the women, girls, and gender-expansive people in San Francisco, but also created a ripple effect that reached across borders and oceans. This pioneering legacy should not be erased or weakened through consolidation or elimination.

The Commission on the Status of Women plays a critical role in ensuring San Francisco lives up to its values of inclusion, transparency, and justice. Through its mandate in the City Charter, it provides critical oversight of equity in City services, appointments, and representation. Representation and civilian oversight are critical for maintaining a true democracy and the balance of power. I also strongly oppose the proposal to give the Mayor unchecked power to appoint and remove commissioners without cause or oversight. This move would weaken public accountability and open the door to political interference. I urge the Task Force to maintain the Commission's full governance authority, its independent voice, and its hiring and firing authority. These are essential to ensuring public trust and real democracy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Newman
Former DOSW Staff