

Our Children, Our Families Council

Summary of Youth Commission

April 23, 2015

Goals of the Effort

The purpose of the Youth Commission is to advise the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor on issues relating to youth and children. Some of the Commission's current issues include:

- Investigating and addressing the effects of the anti-abortion banners displayed on Market Street
- Supporting a democratic and accessible City College of SF
- Ensuring regular review and analysis of outcomes of SFPD referrals to Child Protective Services
- Obtaining Fee Waivers for San Francisco Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals applicants
- Declaring 2015 as the Year of Recognizing homeless youth
- Urging the Recreation and Park Development to conduct a recreation and open space equity analysis
- Fully funding the plan for affordable housing for transitional age youth
- Urging for police officer training to improve youth & police relations
- Promoting and maintaining family unity and connection between youth and their incarcerated parent
- Lowering San Francisco's legal voting age to sixteen years of age and older
- Expanding implementation of 12N Cultural Competency Training and efforts to track LGBTQ youth in city services

Focal Population of the Effort

The Youth Commission advocates for policies effecting youth up to the age of 24.

Impact

The Youth Commission advocates on behalf of youth at City Hall. The recent Commission's policy achievements include:

- Providing free MUNI for thousands of San Francisco's low and moderate-income youth
- Ensuring that San Francisco is accountable as a Sanctuary City by streamlining applications for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, and creating jobs for undocumented youth
- Helping establish rules to ensure youth's rights are respected when police officers make arrests on school campuses
- Winning an increase to the Children's Fund and allowing its use for disconnected Transitional Aged youth (TAY) in the 2014 reauthorization, and landing a seat on the Our Children, Our Families Council
- Keeping the juvenile probation department from arming parole officers

The greatest strength of the Commission is the young people. Also, the Commission benefits from the institutional memory and legitimacy that has developed over time by being a commissioned body. They benefit from sitting in city hall and being in close proximity to developing legislation.

Challenges

One challenge the Commission faces is that its members serve one-year terms. Alums will sometimes come on for trainings and retreats to help overcome the continuity issue.

Origins of the Effort

In 1995, community members lobbied City Hall to pass legislation creating a Youth Commission. Then-Supervisor Angela Alioto sponsored a Charter Amendment that put the question of whether or not to create the Youth commission to the voters of San Francisco. In turn, Proposition F won 60 percent of the vote on the November 1995 ballot, and the Youth Commission was created. The first class of Youth Commissioners were sworn in to office in April of 1996—and the Commission has been working to influence city policies ever since.

Leading the Effort

Adele Carpenter leads the commission. Leadership is decided generally by seniority. Adele and three other staff members are funded by the Board of Supervisors.

Members of the Effort

The Youth Commission is a body of 17 San Franciscans between the ages of 12 and 23. Each member of the Board of Supervisor and the Mayor appoints one member. The Mayor also appoints five members from underrepresented communities. Members serve one-year terms. The 2014-15 roster includes:

- Luis Avalos, City College of SF
- Michel LI, Lowell High
- Joshua Cardenas, Archbishop Riordan High
- Sophie Edelhart, Jewish Community High School of the Bay
- Alexandra Berliner, City College of SF
- Anna Bernick, George Washington High
- Emily Guo, Mission High
- Lily Marshall-Fricker
- Jilian Wu, Lick-Wilmerding High
- Precious Listana, Sacred Heart Cathedral Prep
- Noah David, Everett Middle School
- Rosa Chen, University of SF
- Joyce Wu, Lick-Wilmerding High
- David Zheng, Abraham Lincoln High
- E'mani Davis, SF University High School

Structure of the Effort

The Youth Commission meets regularly as a full body on the first and third Monday of every month. The Commission has standing issue-based committees that meet twice a month as well. Generally the meetings are attended by 90-95% of the members.

Members receive weekly updates about upcoming meetings and going-ons through email and also have one on one meetings with staff.

The Role of Data

The Commission collects qualitative data. They hold youth town halls to help guide their policy making. They track how many policy statements they put out and hours they spend in meetings. They could potentially do more with information from other departments.

Related Documents

- More information about the youth commission can be found at <http://www.sfbos.org/index.aspx?page=5585>
- Youth Commission Brochure
- Youth Commission Provision of the SF Charter, approved by SF Voters as Prop F on November 7, 1995
- SF Youth Commission Meeting Calendar
- SF Youth Commission Agenda for Monday, April 20, 2015
- SF Youth Commission Bylaws
- SF Youth Commission Policy and Budget Priorities

