

**For Immediate Release**

## **Statement on filing of a San Francisco ballot measure: Limits on Navigation Centers**

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Today, Larry Marso and I, both long-term San Francisco residents and concerned citizens, filed a local ballot measure as co-proponents to put limitations on the location and operation of navigation centers.

Since 2015, the birth of the program, only 18% of navigation center residents have been placed in housing. 28% are "homeward bound"--little more than an overnight stay and a bus ticket. More than half of exits are deemed by the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing as "failures", with 30% simply walking away. (HSH, 2019). Meanwhile, conditions on the streets have deteriorated.

Yet City Hall's definition of a navigation center keeps changing. Centers were initially described as temporary emergency pop-up shelters, intended to resolve difficult cases in a neighborhood, with centers required to close within two years. Now, the city is building permanent centers, with skyrocketing costs. The number of beds is rising, mandates are expanding, neighborhood input and the right to challenge in court, systematically dismantled.

Navigation centers are supposed to steer individuals toward a job, addiction counseling, temporary or permanent housing, or back home to friends and family. But the record is mostly of failure.

There are red flags across the board. Centers seem to be enabling addicts, they won't crack down on consumption of alcohol and controlled substances. Violence against fellow residents and staff are common. Centers do not seem serious about the need, in many cases, for mental health hospitalization. Navigation centers have arguably become a free-for-all at the expense of taxpayers and neighbors (health, safety, children, tourists, ADA, more).

Now, Board of Supervisors members Haney, Ronen, Mar, Walton and Preston propose to require a navigation center in *every* supervisory district, regardless of actual need--relocating

the homeless, imposing their philosophy of a "fair" distribution. Further, under their proposal, the minimum stay becomes 90 days, with no maximum limits.

[City and County of San Francisco - File #: 190418](#)

### **Our Ballot Measure for the Voters of San Francisco**

Our measure takes away from politicians the right to mandate the number and location of navigation centers.

We require any new navigation center to be built where we count the most homeless persons.

We restore the original two year limitation on the life of a center.

We enforce the statutory limit of 100 beds--ending the "waiver" that permitted double that at the new Embarcadero navigation center.

We impose a limit of 60 days, renewable if hospitalized, completing rehab, or out of a navigation center for 120 days. (Also we extend the severely mentally ill if prescription compliant). 60 days should be enough to navigate cooperative residents without severe mental health disorders or addictions to transitional or permanent housing, or to reunite them with family and friends.

We prohibit on the premises possession of alcohol or controlled substances, drinking or using, and misdemeanors or felonies, including assault, drug dealing, larceny, pimping or pandering, prostitution, sexual battery or rape. Any violation terminates residence. If staff fails to enforce, the center is required to close.

We prohibit handing out syringes and needles, and take "safe injection sites" on the same premises, off the table.

San Franciscans are outraged, and rightfully so. Hard working taxpayers and law abiding citizens are confused and frustrated. Where are the Mayor, the Supervisors and the Homeless Czar? Many believe City Hall must be held accountable for inaction and, indeed, their moving in the wrong direction. Homelessness is getting worse, not better. Our cherished neighborhoods are being overrun. Our jewel of a city, falling into disrepute and disgrace. We are tired of the talk, the empty promises. This ballot measure has been a long time coming.

Richie Greenberg

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