RESOLUTION NO. _____

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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RESOLUTION REAFFIRMING THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE RIGHTS OF VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES IN SAN MATEO COUNTY

RESOLVED, by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Mateo, State of California, that:

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 61,000,000 Americans live with a disability, and the School of Management and Labor Relations at Rutgers University estimated that in 2016 there were approximately 35,400,000 people with disabilities eligible to vote in the United States; and

WHEREAS, despite the size and diversity of people with disabilities eligible to vote, accessibility to America's elections can be challenging, as voters with disabilities may face physical barriers at polling places, limited accessibility to information and registration materials, difficulty in obtaining and completing ballots independently, challenges related to transportation and mobility, and potential barriers associated with communication and comprehension; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, the County of San Mateo's Registration & Elections Division ("Elections") founded the Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee, a committee tasked with providing guidance and information on accessibility matters related to the conduct of elections; and

WHEREAS, the County of San Mateo is dedicated to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion; and

WHEREAS, the County was one of the first counties in the State of California to develop solutions for voters with disabilities in response to changes in statewide voting processes; and

WHEREAS, registered voters with disabilities in San Mateo County may: (1) request a remote accessible vote by mail ballot; (2) request to have a paper ballot personally delivered to their home and receive assistance in marking and returning the ballot from County Election's staff; (3) request that County Election's staff bring an accessible ballot marking tablet to a convenient location; or (4) request that County Election's staff arrange free transportation to and from a County Vote Center during the early voting period, where the accessible ballot marking tablet may be used; and

WHEREAS, in addition, to facilitate accessible curbside voting in San Mateo County, each Vote Center curbside drop-off location is equipped with a wireless bell, which can be activated with a tap or light touch from a vehicle's window, and, in response, depending on the voter's preference and registration status, either: (1) a Vote by Mail to-go packet will be created and delivered to the voter, who can mark their ballot and return it by mail, using an outdoor Drop Box, or to any County Vote Center; or (2) a paper ballot will be brought to the voter inside a secrecy folder and, after the voter has marked their ballot in the vehicle, the Election's team assisting the voter will deposit the voted ballot in a ballot box or, if the voter asks to see their ballot deposited directly into the ballot box, a sealed ballot box will be brought to the vehicle; and

WHEREAS, through site visits and cooperation from facilities used as Vote Centers throughout San Mateo County, the County ensures that all voting locations are accessible to voters with disabilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title II, and guidelines established by the California Secretary of State; and

WHEREAS, the California Constitution and Elections Code Section 2300, establish a Voter Bill of Rights, which grants all California voters:

- the right to cast a ballot if you are a valid registered voter;
- the right to cast a provisional ballot if your name is not listed on the voting rolls;
- the right to cast a ballot if you are present and in line at the polling place before the close of the polls;
- the right to cast a secret ballot free from intimidation;
- the right to receive a new ballot if, before casting your ballot, you believe you made a mistake;
- the right to receive assistance in casting your ballot, if you are unable to vote without assistance;
- the right to return a completed vote by mail ballot to any precinct (Vote Center) in San Mateo County;
- the right to election materials in another language, if there are sufficient residents in your precinct to warrant production;
- the right to ask questions about election procedures and observe the election process; and
- the right to report any illegal or fraudulent activity to a local elections official or to the Secretary of State’s office.

WHEREAS, under California law, a person is presumed competent to vote regardless of the person's conservatorship status, and is only disqualified from voting if a court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the person cannot communicate, with or without reasonable accommodations, a desire to participate in the voting process; and

WHEREAS, it is essential to ensure that voters with disabilities have equal access to the ballot box to uphold the principles of democracy and protect all voters' civil rights, regardless of disability status.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors reaffirms its continued support for the rights of San Mateo County voters with disabilities, and commits to working collaboratively with election officials, disability advocacy organizations, and community stakeholders to promote equal access to the ballot box for all residents of San Mateo County, regardless of disability status.

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