RESOLUTION NO. .

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

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RESOLUTION URGING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS, INCLUDING ON META, FACEBOOK, X, INSTAGRAM, AND TIKTOK TO ENFORCE THEIR COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND GUIDELINESTO ADDRESS CONTENT PROMOTING GUNS, VIOLENCE, RACISM, HATE, OR ANY OTHER CONTENT THAT VIOLATES THE COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

WHEREAS, Social Media Platforms are interactive technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, interests, and other expression through virtual communities and networks; and

WHEREAS, the term ‘social’ in regard to ‘media’ suggests that platforms are user- centric and enable communal activity and as such, social media can be viewed as online facilitators or enhancers of human networks—webs of individuals who enhance social connectivity but, unfortunately, social media platforms can also be spaces where violence can spread in communities resulting in life or death consequences; and

WHEREAS, Meta Platforms, Inc., doing business as Meta (and formerly referred to as Facebook, Inc.), , , is an American multinational technology company based in Menlo Park, California and is one of the biggest social media companies with the largest user base and it owns and operates Facebook and Instagram, among other products and services; and

WHEREAS, according to Meta, the Facebook Community Standards state: “The goal of our Community Standards has always been to create a safe place for expression, but we recognize the internet creates new and increased opportunities for abuse;” and

WHEREAS, Facebook's community standards states that it aims to prevent potential offline harm that may be related to content on Facebook and Meta has stated that it removes language from Facebook that incites or facilitates serious violence along with removing content, disabling accounts and working with law enforcement when Facebook believes there is a genuine risk of physical harm or direct threats to public safety; and

WHEREAS, Facebook also has Community Standards on violence and criminal behavior, safety, objectionable content including hate speech or sexual solicitation, integrity and authenticity including guidelines on fake accounts, respecting intellectual property, and content-related requests and decisions from users; and

WHEREAS, Instagram states that it "is not a place to support or praise terrorism, organized crime, or hate groups; Offering sexual services, buying or selling firearms, alcohol, and tobacco products between private individuals, and buying or selling non-medical or pharmaceutical drugs are also not allowed," and

WHEREAS, according to Instagram, "serious threats of harm to public and personal safety aren't allowed; This includes specific threats of physical harm as well as threats of theft, vandalism, and other financial harm; We carefully review reports of threats and consider many things when determining whether a threat is credible"; and

WHEREAS, according to TikTok, the company does not allow any violent threats, incitement to violence, or promotion of criminal activities that may harm people, animals, or property… if there is a specific, credible, and imminent threat to human life or serious physical injury, [they] will report it to relevant law enforcement authorities; and

WHEREAS, both Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and other Social Media Platforms have options for users to report content if it violates the Community Standards or Guidelines but the process of removing the flagged content is not transparent and often flagged content in violation continues to stay on the respective platforms for long periods of time or are never removed; and

WHEREAS, despite the Community Standards and Guidelines, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and other Social Media Platforms continue to allow people to post content promoting guns, eliciting violence, and spreading hate among other content that threatens the safety of individuals or groups; and

WHEREAS, in some cases, when content in violation of Community Standards and/or Guidelines are removed, it is too late and the damage in real life consequences have already happened; and

WHEREAS, content that is violation of Community Standards and Guidelines but remain posted on the respective platforms have real life consequences resulting in increased violence in communities, including in some cases, gun violence between individuals and groups resulting in homicides; and

WHEREAS, organizations, local governing entities, public defenders, and law enforcement leadership across the state and country support Social Media Platforms to enforce their own Community Standards and/or Guidelines to ensure that violence does not spread into shootings, homicides, and retaliation in the community;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County urges all Social Media Platforms to regulate and address content that promotes guns, elicits violence, and spreads hate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County urges all Social Media Platforms to enforce their Community Standards and Guidelines and address user generated reports on their Social Media Platforms, including on Meta, Facebook, X, Instagram, and TikTok and other products and services, in a timely manner to prevent any violence, especially gun violence, from social media into real life; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County urges all Social Media Platforms to cooperate with local governing entities and law enforcement to prevent violence from spreading on their Social Media Platforms as a result of postings by their users; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of San Mateo County hereby directs the Clerk of the Board to transmit a copy of this Resolution to Meta, Facebook, X, Instagram, and TikTok, the top largest Social Media Platform companies currently in operation.

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