



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
**Inter-Departmental Correspondence**  
Board of Supervisors



**DATE:** May 22, 2014  
**BOARD MEETING DATE:** June 3, 2014  
**SPECIAL NOTICE/HEARING:** None  
**VOTE REQUIRED:** Majority

**TO:** Honorable Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Supervisors Dave Pine and Adrienne J. Tissier

**SUBJECT:** Establishment of the San Mateo County Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Commission

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a Resolution establishing the San Mateo County Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Commission.

**BACKGROUND:**

There are numerous boards and commissions that perform specific County government functions or that advise the Board of Supervisors on a range of issues. Some of these commissions, including, for example, the Commission on Aging and the Commission on Disabilities, focus on policy matters and issues of interest to specific segments of the population within San Mateo County.

While a number of cities and counties throughout California have Human Rights Commissions that address issues of concern to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individuals and families, it does not appear that any California county or city has to date established a commission specifically focused on the LGBTQ community. However, LGBTQ-specific commissions have been formed in several cities outside of California, including: Seattle, Washington; Denver, Colorado; Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Tucson, Arizona.

Community stakeholders and County staff have reviewed the structure and mandates of these existing LGBTQ commissions and have determined that these commissions share common goals. For example, each is charged with recommending policies and legislation to foster the well-being of LGBTQ individuals, typically with a particular emphasis on vulnerable populations, such as transgender individuals, seniors, and youth.

## **DISCUSSION:**

Members of the San Mateo County LGBTQ community have come together to request that the Board of Supervisors establish a San Mateo County LGBTQ Commission in order to improve the quality of life and well-being of LGBTQ County residents. County staff has worked with community representatives to draft a resolution establishing such a commission.

A 2010 census snapshot released by the Williams Institute, an LGBTQ think tank at UCLA, estimated that there are 1,970 same-sex couples living in San Mateo. The report states that 13 percent of these couples are raising children.

Since February of this year, a working group comprised of over a dozen LGBTQ community leaders in San Mateo County has conducted outreach and discussions to set the foundation for the Commission. This work has included distributing a community survey soliciting input about the goals and desired outcomes for such a commission. 92 community members responded to the survey. The survey results indicate that reaching out to vulnerable LGBTQ community members in San Mateo County – including youth and seniors – to be among the most important issues for the Commission to address.

The LGBTQ Commission would promote programs and policies that foster the well-being and civic participation of LGBTQ individuals in San Mateo County. Potential areas of focus include:

- Bringing greater recognition and visibility to the LGBTQ community in San Mateo County by supporting such events as the County's Pride celebration
- Reducing harassment and bullying of LGBTQ youth in local middle schools and high schools.
- Developing policy recommendations to improve outcomes for underserved and at-risk segments of the LGBTQ population, including youth, communities of color, non-English speakers, seniors, and immigrants.
- Promoting transgender inclusion among private and public entities in San Mateo County including access to health care and to gendered spaces such as bathrooms and shelters.
- Recommending initiatives to support LGBTQ families with children.
- Taking positions pertaining to federal, state and local policies, programs, and procedures, and any legislation affecting LGBTQ individuals.

## **Commission Structure**

The Commission would have nine voting members appointed by the Board of Supervisors to serve three-year terms. However, initial terms upon formation of the commission would be staggered so that four of the initial members would serve two-year terms in order to ensure the continuity of the Commission by avoiding the simultaneous expiration of all member terms. The Commission would meet at least six times a year and it would implement a yearly work plan. The LGBTQ Commission would provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors at least once a year.

Approval of this Resolution contributes to several of the County's Shared Vision 2025 outcomes. It supports the goal of promoting a Healthy Community by encouraging sensitivity to the needs of LGBTQ individuals in connection with County healthcare programs, thereby reducing barriers to treatment. It promotes a Livable Community by helping LGBTQ individuals successfully integrate into the community, both by promoting positive attitudes toward LGBTQ individuals and by helping LGBTQ individuals feel a sense of belonging through visible signs of support. Finally, approval of the Resolution promotes a Collaborative Community by encouraging LGBTQ individuals to become civically engaged, as well as by helping to educate the broader community about LGBTQ issues.

The Commission would be supported by staff from the County's Human Resources Department.

County Counsel has reviewed and approved the Resolution as to form.

### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no impact to the budget at this time. Resources to staff and support the Commissions' work will be determined once the goals and priorities of the Commission have been established. Currently, required staff support is estimated not to exceed 0.5 FTE.