



• SAN FRANCISCO •
WOMEN'S POLITICAL COMMITTEE

**SFWPC Support for Resolution #240178
Supporting California State Senate Bill No. 1170**

March 4, 2024

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall, Legislative Chamber, Room 250
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: Resolution #240178 - Supporting California State Senate Bill No. 1170

Dear Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the San Francisco Women's Political Committee (SFWPC), we are writing in strong support of Resolution #240178, brought forward by Supervisor Stefani, which endorses California Senate Bill No. 1170, to allow individuals who are running for office to use campaign funds to cover for reasonable and necessary mental health expenses.

As an organization who champions policies that support equitable and inclusive systems in politics, we recognize that running for office is a daunting endeavor, and one significant deterrent for potential candidates is the impact on their mental health. The high level of hostility on the campaign trail is a well-documented issue, with surveys indicating that more than 40% of state legislators have experienced harassment in the past 3 years¹. Women and individuals from under-represented groups are particularly vulnerable, as they are four times more likely to suffer from mental health issues as a result. In order to ensure fair representation in office, it is crucial to address the mental health barriers that prevent talented individuals with no or inadequate healthcare coverage from participating in the political arena. This barrier to entry deprives the political landscape of potentially outstanding and talented lawmakers who could contribute significantly to policy-making.

1. 192, et al. "Intimidation of State and Local Officeholders." Brennan Center for Justice, 25 Jan. 2024, www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/intimidation-state-and-local-officeholders.



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The gender disparity in the challenges faced during political campaigns is evident from studies such as the one conducted by the California Women's List, revealing that a staggering 80% of female candidates have encountered hostility in the form of online abuse. This issue is exacerbated for LGBTQ+ women who reported online abuse at a rate of 93%². Tackling this problem is essential not just for equity but also for fostering an inclusive political environment where all voices, regardless of gender, can actively participate without fear for their mental health. In 2019, California removed an important obstacle for candidates, by allowing the use of campaign funds towards childcare expenses. This bill continues to remove barriers and contributes to creating a more diverse and representative pool of candidates for California.

We urge you to support Resolution #240178. By supporting this resolution, we send a strong message to our state legislature that San Francisco stands for equity and inclusion in political spaces, and that we are committed to remove barriers to ensure broad political participation from under-represented communities.

Sincerely,

SFWPC Board of Directors

²Her Stories on the Campaign Trail - Analyzing the Mental Health Impacts of Hostility Women Face Pursuing Political Office in California, California Women's List, August 2023