



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COMMISSION

Edwin M. Lee, Mayor
Naomi Kelly, City Administrator

September 8, 2016

Commissioners:

Celine Kennelly, Chair
Haregu Gaime, Vice Chair
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Melba Maldonado
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Executive Director:

Adrienne Pon
Office of Civic Engagement &
Immigrant Affairs

REAFFIRMATION OF THE SAN FRANCISCO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COMMISSION

America is a nation of immigrants. From its beginning, immigrants from across the world arrived seeking opportunities to build better lives and futures for their families. The Native People, caretakers of American soil and the original Americans, shared their land and knowledge only to be persecuted and mistreated by newcomers. Some immigrants were forced to come here through slavery.

As each wave of new immigrants from Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East have sought refuge and opportunity in this country, they have been both welcomed and vilified. Despite this painful and racist history, our nation is the result of the perseverance, commitment and labor of immigrants, who built the infrastructure, businesses, transportation, roads, and structures that make America the great diverse country it is today.

But the reality of a two-prong, unprecedented global crisis— terrorism and large numbers of people moving within and across borders to flee warfare and untold horrors inflicted by their fellow human beings— have inflamed the issues here and abroad. Anti-immigrant rhetoric and xenophobia have increased to unprecedented levels, with calls across the globe for border walls, denial of basic human rights and services to refugees and migrants, the deportation of millions of law-abiding long-time immigrant residents, and increased acts of violence and scapegoating of immigrant communities. Concerns for daily survival compounded with the issues of affordability, gentrification, income inequity and safety here and abroad, have created insurmountable anger, fear and mistrust for all residents, immigrant or not.

We must not lose our humanity. Since 1997, the San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission has fought to ensure the rights and well-being of immigrant communities. During the 2016 Presidential elections, we call upon our business, community, and government leaders to join us in reaffirming a shared commitment to the true American ideals of compassion, freedom and opportunity.

This is the America and world that we want to live in—a place that is welcoming, diverse and safe for all.

Handwritten signature of Celine Kennelly in blue ink.

Celine Kennelly, Chair

Handwritten signature of Haregu Gaime in blue ink.

Haregu Gaime, Vice Chair

San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission

The Immigrant Rights Commission is an appointed 15-member body that informs and advises the Mayor, Board of Supervisors and city officials on the wellbeing and integration of immigrants in San Francisco. Members of the Commission must be citizens of the United States. For more information on the IRC, contact the Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs at civic.engagement@sfgov.org.