SF IMMIGRANT RIGHTS DEFENSE COMMITTEE PLATFORM

Immigrants from poor countries come to our city because of the impacts of US Fair Trade Agreements, such as NAFTA and CAFTA. Immigrant communities come to our city as globalization refugees and their main focus is to improve the living conditions of their families. Immigrants are 40% of our city's population and they contribute greatly to the financial wellbeing of our city.

PROBLEM: In the last six months, our city has been held hostage by intense media anti-immigrant pressure that has scapegoated immigrant communities. Acts of violence hurt our communities, when these incidents involve select individuals they should not be used to discriminate against and punish a whole community.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

1. Reiterate San Francisco's values in support of social justice and the inclusion of all residents including immigrants.
2. Request that the Mayor make a public statement upholding our city's belief that all SF residents regardless of immigration status have the right to live free from fear in our city.
3. Request that representatives of the Mayor's office and our city's leadership be culturally competent and have a strong background in civil and human rights, and an understanding of the challenges facing new immigrants.

PROBLEM: Immigration Customs & Enforcement (ICE) agents have in recent years intensified their enforcement activities in our city in the form of raids of private homes, on public streets, and at worksites. These raids are not targeted only at a select few, but instead are neighborhood sweeps that result in the detention and deportation of bystanders and family members, including workers, youth, and families who contribute to the fabric of San Francisco. Thousands of San Franciscans, including children, live in terror that they may be separated from their families at any moment. Many fail to access city services, including hospitals and schools, for fear of being detained by ICE. These "shock and awe" tactics are not a long term solution to our immigration concerns. Since the scrutiny against immigrants began this last summer, Mayor Newsom has not yet publicly denounced these raids and must do so immediately.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

1. Mayor Newsom must aggressively work to stop federal ICE raids in San Francisco by publicly denouncing them and by lobbying Congressional leaders to support more humane immigration policies.
2. San Francisco must maintain, and where possible, increase funding to assist victims of ICE raids, provide support to working families, and provide education and after school services to immigrant youth.

PROBLEM: San Francisco neighborhoods with high concentrations of immigrant residents report that the San Francisco Police Department has begun conducting police check-points targeted at harassing immigrant residents. Reports indicate that mainly Latino drivers are stopped and questioned based on their race and ethnicity. Latino immigrant drivers have had their vehicles confiscated or have been given meritless harassing citations.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

1. Mayor Newsom must stop SFPD from conducting traffic and pedestrian check-points targeted at racially profiling and harassing immigrant residents.

PROBLEM: Under San Francisco's new policy toward undocumented youth, immigrant youth are often wrongfully arrested and detained, reported to immigration authorities before they are given opportunity to appear in juvenile court or obtain an attorney, reported to immigration authorities for non-violent first-time offenses, and are torn away from their families. It is unconscionable that San Francisco is blaming all of our crimes problems on immigrant youth and not allowing immigrant youth access to due process and other fundamental rights given to all residents.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

1. Immigrant youth must not be automatically referred to immigration officials for deportation at the booking stage prior to any court review or an opportunity to speak with an attorney; they must be afforded the same due process rights as all San Franciscans. Immigrant youth must be adjudicated under the same principles governing the juvenile justice system as all other youth regardless of immigration status, which include rehabilitation, family unification, public safety, and confidentiality.
2. San Francisco must invest resources in providing all youth including immigrant children, quality education, job opportunities and other resources to help them develop into productive members of our communities.

PROBLEM: Approximately one year ago, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors overwhelmingly passed a law instituting the Municipal Identification Program to ensure that all city residents, including youth, immigrants, LGBT, seniors, and the homeless can obtain official city identification. The cards also are intended to support local businesses by providing discounts to SF residents to businesses that choose to participate in the program. However, the Mayor has stalled implementation of the ID program for many months despite a court decision that the card benefits all San Franciscans.

POLICY RECOMMENDATION:

1. Mayor Newsom must announce and support a specific date for the implementation of San Francisco's Municipal Identification Program. It is imperative for many San Francisco residents to acquire their municipal identification in order to easily access city services and also so that all residents can support local businesses.