

To: Mayor London Breed

From:
Nikhilendra Chand

April 8th 2020

Dear Mayor Breed,

As a culmination project for eighth graders, our school requires that we tackle a pressing issue in the region and strive to make an impact relating to it. Being a native of San Francisco, I decided to choose homelessness, specifically in the city. No citizen of this great country can ignore that we are at a crossroads. The political climate is so torrid and divisive that simple issues rip the fabric of our society. Yet, the homelessness issue is one that every citizen can agree is urgent and important. It is an issue that speaks volumes about the inefficiency of bureaucracy and the lackadaisical attitude of the wealthy. You've said it yourself, it can be 'scary to walk the streets of San Francisco' and see the oftentimes mentally-ill or addicted residents lining the streets. But what is stronger for myself and hopefully every man, woman, and child who strolls the sidewalks is the feeling of sorrow and sometimes penitence, both deriving from the fact that, ultimately, people who live on the streets are human. These people most often did no moral wrong to deserve the predicament in which they preside. While you've made it clear that a chief platform of your administration is tackling this issue, one can't help feel that the situation has worsened, and the statistics don't lie. San Francisco's homelessness population has increased by 14% since 2017 and a larger percentage of them has become unsheltered. Of course any problem stems from multiple sources, and by no means do I expect you to prevent homelessness entirely. But certainly in a city where the residents care so much about this issue, shouldn't it be easier to take measures to chip away at the crisis? Furthermore, in a liberal city that actively supports

taxing and limiting the power of the wealthy, shouldn't it be relatively straightforward to rally up the majority and defeat the few affluent communities that prevent necessary measures from taking effect? The first step in my mind would be to outline an agenda and give a pathos-centered speech to the masses. Second, I would establish a five year plan to build more shelters and establish greater social and medical support. Throughout the whole process I would be transparent about my actions; after all, the government gains its power from the trust of the people whom it serves. I know that you care about this issue, but I sincerely hope that you take this letter seriously enough to consider the things I've said. Despite my many criticisms of it, I care deeply about the city in which I was born and know so well. I believe that no one should have to spend their life fighting their way off of the street, especially in a city that has a median income nearly \$30,000 above the national average. I'll try my best to do my part by volunteering and raising awareness, but what residents of the city are interested in is — are doing yours?

Sincerely,

8th Grade, Woodland School Portola Valley

Rising 9th Grader, University High School of San Francisco