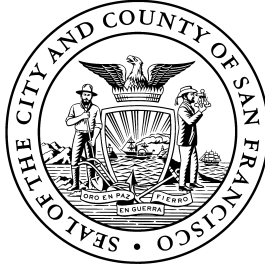


City and County
of San Francisco



Board of Supervisors,
District 6

MATT DORSEY

麥德誠

NEWS RELEASE

Dorsey seeks ‘Right to Recovery’ report to assess the costs of untreated addiction to San Francisco taxpayers

Supervisor pushing to fund solutions to drug-related harms wants ‘a clear-eyed view of how much it’s costing San Francisco taxpayers right now not to solve drug-related harms’

SAN FRANCISCO (Aug. 28, 2022) — Supervisor Matt Dorsey will tomorrow formally request the City’s controller and chief economist to begin the process of preparing a rigorous financial analysis to determine the public sector costs that untreated drug addiction is currently imposing on San Francisco taxpayers.

Dorsey, the first member of the substance use disorder recovery community to serve on San Francisco’s Board of Supervisors in a generation, has cited his own personal journey in recovery from drug addiction as his main motivation for seeking Mayor London Breed’s appointment to a Board vacancy last May. In [the letter](#) he is sending to City Controller Ben Rosenfield and Chief Economist Ted Egan on Monday, Dorsey explains his intention to seek funding and legislate biennial updates to what he calls a “Right to Recovery Report.”

According to his letter, Dorsey foresees the requested report “as a rigorous and detailed analysis modeled on past research by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University and a recent study performed for the State of Oregon,” which found that untreated drug addiction claimed nearly 17 percent of that state’s annual budget in 2017.

“Given my intention on the Board of Supervisors to fight for increased funding to treat substance use disorders and pursue drug market interventions in San Francisco, I expect this ‘Right to Recovery Report’ to play an influential role in informing city policymakers on the urgency of finding solutions,” Dorsey wrote. “As we debate what it costs to solve drug-related harms, in other words, I want a clear-eyed view of how much it’s costing San Francisco taxpayers right now *not* to solve drug-related harms.”

Dorsey’s letter also made reference to work he had done with City Controller Rosenfield and Chief Economist Egan a decade earlier, when City Hall’s top beancounters delivered evidence the supervisor called “remarkably influential” in San Francisco’s long legal battle to end marriage discrimination against same-sex couples. As news organizations noted at the time, “California’s ban on same-sex marriage cost San Francisco \$37.2 million per year in receipts, according to Ted Egan, chief economist in the San Francisco Controller’s Office.” (Source: [“Slowly, GOP shifting on same-sex marriage,”](#) CNN, March 21, 2013.)

Dorsey, who served for 14 years as communications director to City Attorney Dennis Herrera between 2002 and 2016, added, “I have always regarded your office as the unsung hero of marriage equality and our successful fight to strike down Proposition 8 in 2013.”

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For immediate release: Aug. 28, 2022

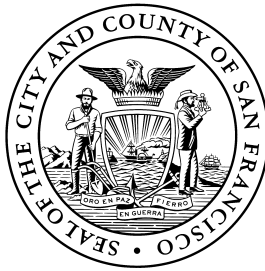
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August 29, 2022

Ben Rosenfield, City Controller
Ted Egan, Chief Economist
OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER
City Hall, Room 316
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
San Francisco, CA 94102

Transmitted via email to ben.rosenfield@sfgov.org and ted.egan@sfgov.org

Re: Request to scope a “Right to Recovery Report” on the public costs of untreated addiction

Dear City Controller Rosenfield and Chief Economist Egan,

I write to ask for your office’s assistance in scoping a comprehensive report that will reliably estimate the costs of untreated drug addiction to the City and County of San Francisco.

My hope is that this would include your assessment of methodologies and costs to complete and then biennially update a study I am calling a “Right to Recovery Report,” which I foresee as a rigorous and detailed analysis modeled on past research by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University¹ and a recent study performed for the State of Oregon, which found a startling portion of that state’s annual budget to be directly attributable to untreated drug addiction.

¹ National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, “Shoveling Up II: The Impact of Substance Abuse on Federal, State and Local Budgets,” May 2009.
https://drugfree.org/wp-content/uploads/drupal/Shoveling-up-II-the-impact-of-substance-abuse-on-federal-state-and-local-budgets_0.pdf

Indeed, the executive summary of the report by the State of Oregon’s Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission noted as follows:²

State spending on substance more than quadrupled since 2005 — consuming nearly 17% of the entire state budget in 2017. Less than 1% of those funds, however, were used to prevent, treat, or help people recover from substance misuse. The majority of those dollars went to pay for escalating health and social consequences created by the lack of investment in prevention, treatment, and recovery.

In asking for this analytical scoping exercise, my hope is to identify resources your department may require to complete such a report, so that I may seek funding and legislate updates to it every two years, early in the City’s budget process. Given my intention on the Board of Supervisors to fight for increased funding to treat substance use disorders and pursue drug market interventions in San Francisco, I expect this “Right to Recovery Report” to play an influential role in informing city policymakers on the urgency of finding solutions.

In other words, as we debate costs to solve drug-related harms, I want a clear-eyed view of how much it’s costing San Francisco taxpayers right now *not* to solve drug-related harms.

You will recall that our work together a decade ago provided evidence that would be remarkably influential in San Francisco’s long legal battle to end marriage discrimination against same-sex couples. In fact, I have always regarded your office as the unsung hero of marriage equality and our successful fight to strike down Proposition 8 in 2013.

I look forward to working with you and your team again on this new project, which I believe will offer much-needed perspective on the progress our City must endeavor to make.

Best,



MATT DORSEY

² State of Oregon, Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission, 2020-2025 Oregon Statewide Strategic Plan, [https://www.oregon.gov/adpc/SiteAssets/Pages/index/Statewide%20Strategic%20Plan%20Final%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/adpc/SiteAssets/Pages/index/Statewide%20Strategic%20Plan%20Final%20(1).pdf)