



**For Immediate Release**

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**\*\*\* PRESS RELEASE\*\*\***

**LET'S RAISE OUR VOICE ON WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY**

*Join us to expand women's registration and representation on August 23, 2018 at 5pm*

**San Francisco, CA** – San Francisco Assessor Carmen Chu is excited to collaborate with the Department on the Status of Women and the League of Women Voters San Francisco for the first time to co-host the 2018 Women's Equality Day. The event will take place on August 23, Thursday, at 5pm, with a kick-off ceremony in front of San Francisco City Hall, followed by a panel discussion at the Main Library.

"2018 is the Year of the Woman. As we commemorate women winning the right to vote, let's make sure we go a step further and actually exercise our right to be heard and register to vote," said San Francisco Assessor Carmen Chu. She is only Asian American female elected Assessor in California and one of the citywide female elected officials in San Francisco.

Women's Equality Day was first established in 1973 to commemorate the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution, granting women the right to vote. However, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, only two-thirds of eligible women registered to vote in the November 2016 election, the lowest third compared to other states nationwide.

"The facts are shocking but I believe we can do better. We have a female Mayor and majority of our Board of Supervisors is represented by women," said Chu, who will launch a women engagement project called the "W Challenge" at the kick-off. The Challenge is designed to be a fun and engaging way for women to take action. Participants who accept the challenge will need to pledge to vote, share their voting story on social media, and encourage one more woman to register and pledge to vote. "Our goal is ambitious, that all women will turn out to vote, but we can start with one woman at a time!" said Chu.

Apart from voter participation, women's representation in government is equally important. The panel discussion at the Main Library following the City Hall kick-off will feature Supervisor Ahsha Safai, Chair of the Board of Supervisor's Rules Committee, and Mawuli Tugbenyoh, the Mayor's Liaison to Boards and Commissions, and Women's Commissioner Sonia Melara, who has served on four different Commissions to speak on how to get appointed to the City's Boards and Commissions. It will be moderated by Debbie Mesloh, President of the Commission on the Status of Women.

"Women's representation on Commissions and Boards has been roughly equal to the 49% of San Franciscans who are women. However, women and, in particular, women of color are still underrepresented on the policy bodies with the largest budgets," said Dr. Emily Murase, Director of the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women since 2004. Her office analyzes the gender and racial breakdown of all

City Commissions and Boards every two years. According to the 2017 report, while 1 in 3 San Franciscans are women of color, they account for only 1 in 4 appointees to city policy bodies. “This panel is an important opportunity to help women find ways to contribute their expertise and perspectives on our Commissions and Boards,” said Murase.

“We are honored to be a part of this collaboration. Our democracy depends on participation, so it is incredibly important for women to be engaged in the democratic process,” said Leah Edwards, President of League of Women Voters San Francisco, a non-profit organization that encourages citizen participation in government issues and public policy. “Given that half of our population is female, women are very important to creating a more perfect democracy,” said Edwards. Of the 535 seats in the U.S. Congress, only 107 (20%) are occupied by women.

To find out more and to register for the event, please RSVP [here](#).

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