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***** PRESS RELEASE****

Human Rights Commission’s Equity Advisory Committee to Host Public Forum on Workplace Harassment and Violence towards Low-Income Immigrant Women.

Forum will identify the specific issues confronted by women workers, and formulate recommendations on ways the HRC and the City of San Francisco can help prevent and effectively respond to low income and immigrant women survivors of harassment and violence in the workplace.

(San Francisco, CA) The San Francisco Human Rights Commission’s Equity Advisory Committee will convene a panel discussion on violence and harassment facing low income and immigrant women in the workplace. Entitled “Safe at Work”, the public forum will identify the specific issues confronted by this community of women in San Francisco. Taking place on November 7, 2013 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 pm in the Latino/Hispanic Room in the Main Branch of the San Francisco Public Library, members of the public are invited to attend and provide public testimony. Following the panel, the EAC will formulate recommendations on ways the HRC and the City of San Francisco can help prevent and effectively respond to immigrant women survivors of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace. Supervisor Jane Kim of District 6 of San Francisco will provide introductory remarks.

Through this forum, the EAC will document testimony from low-wage immigrant women workers who have survived harassment and violence in the workplace, listen to people’s stories and document the impact of this epidemic, particularly the impact on the psychological and economic stability of these women and their families. Moreover, the hearing will explore how cultural factors and strong fears of retaliation deter these women from reporting the harassment or assault. The forum will also shed light on how language barriers and lack of training about workplace policies and procedures serve as obstacles to these women being educated about their rights. In addition, the EAC is requesting that speakers make recommendations and propose changes in the workplace and local policy changes that can directly address this issue. This testimony will be documented in a report and used as an advocacy tool for continued education and outreach on this issue.

The EAC has planned this event as the culmination of a series of focus groups held with different stakeholders to engage in a dialogue about the safety and dignity of low-wage immigrant women workers in San Francisco and the impact that harassment and violence has on these women in the workplace. The EAC is proud to have several local experts on the panel including, William R. Tamayo,
Regional District Attorney of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Josué Argüelles, co-director of Young Workers United, Dr. Susan Winkel, Professor and Clinical Psychologist at The Wright Institute. Maria Ontiveros, Professor at the University of San Francisco School of Law will moderate the discussion.

This panel is co-sponsored by Asian Law Caucus, Equal Rights Advocates, Golden Gate University Women’s Employment Rights Clinic, Legal Aid Society – Employment Law Center, Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Services, Progressive Worker Alliance, Restaurant Opportunities Center United, San Francisco Department of the Status of Women, and San Francisco Women Against Rape.

_The EAC is a volunteer citizen advisory committee tasked with advising the HRC on a wide range of issues, including: human trafficking, environmental and criminal justice, immigration, housing access, workforce diversity and equality of opportunity. The EAC maintains two working groups specializing in workplace safety for immigrant women and outreach and education on the Deferred Action for Early Arrivals Program. Applications are currently being accepted for 2014 and are available on at www.sf-hrc.org_