FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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***** STATEMENT****

San Francisco Human Rights Commission Director Praises Governor Jerry Brown on Signing AB 1266 Which Extends Critical Equal Protection and Equal Access to Transgender Students Related to School Activities/Programs and School Facilities Such As Restrooms

San Francisco, CA - Today, California Gov. Jerry Brown signed the landmark Pupil’s Rights Legislation (AB1266) into law which mandates equal protection and equal access for transgender students in the State’s elementary and secondary schools. The new law requires that a pupil be permitted to participate in sex-segregated school programs and activities, including athletic teams and competitions, and use facilities consistent with his or her gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on the pupil’s records. This legislation is the first of its kind in the country. Theresa Sparks, Executive Director of the San Francisco Human Rights Commission (HRC) stated:

“This legislation is revolutionary as it addresses in large part the single most critical issue facing the Transgender Community as it relates to the use of public facilities such as bathrooms and other traditional gender specific public accommodations. AB1266 will shift the emphasis away from the traditional concept of the gender binary while fostering greater inclusion and allowing for greater protections regarding the health and wellness and personal safety of school age Transgender youth which is essential toward their ability to experience academic success on par with their peers. I commend all our state policy makers including Assembliespersons Tom Ammiano and Toni Atkins and Senators Mark Leno and Ricardo Lara for their unrelenting stewardship and advocacy toward improving the quality of life for Transgender students in the California school system as well as the LGBT community at large. I also applaud Governor Jerry Brown for his insight and compassion toward ensuring that all California’s diverse communities are treated with dignity and respect so that we all may achieve our fullest potential of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness regardless of sexual orientation, sexual identity or expression.”

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AB1266 prohibits public schools from discriminating on the basis of specified characteristics, including gender, gender identity, and gender expression, and specifies various statements of legislative intent and the policies of the state in that regard. The new law requires that participation in a particular physical education activity or sport, if required of pupils of one sex, be available to pupils of each sex. This bill also requires that a pupil be permitted to participate in sex-segregated school programs and activities, including athletic teams and competitions, and use facilities consistent with his or her gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on the pupil’s records.

The San Francisco Human Rights Commission was established in 1964 by City Ordinance and became a Charter Commission in 1990. In 2014 the HRC will celebrate 50 years of distinguished public service in human rights advocacy for the City and County of San Francisco.