

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ED FLYNN, JOHN FITZGERALD, HENRY SANTANA,
BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, DURKAN, FERNANDES ANDERSON, MEJIA, MURPHY,
PEPÉN, WEBER, WORRELL AND LOUIJEUNE



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION DENOUNCING THE RENAMING OF U.S. NAVY SHIP HARVEY MILK AND OTHER U.S. NAVY SHIPS NAMED AFTER IMPORTANT CIVIL RIGHTS ADVOCATES

WHEREAS: Last week, the United States Secretary of Defense ordered multiple U.S. Navy Ships to be renamed. This included USNS Harvey Milk, named after Gay Rights activist Harvey Milk, which is set to be renamed on June 13th; *and*

WHEREAS: Harvey Milk was the first openly gay candidate to be elected to elected office in California, serving as a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 1977. As a member of the Board of Supervisors, he brought forward supportive LGBTQ+ legislation, including a bill banning discrimination based on sexual orientation in housing, employment and public accommodation; *and*

WHEREAS: Prior to being elected, Milk served as a U.S. Navy Naval Reserve Officer between 1952 to 1954 during the Korean War, where he held posts on the USS Chanticleer and the USS Kittiwake. In 1955, he was forced to resign from the U.S. Navy due to being gay, and was discharged with "Other Than Honorable" status, which excluded him from being entitled to any military benefits. In 1978, Milk was assassinated along with San Francisco Mayor George Moscone by a former elected San Francisco Supervisor. In 2021, USNS Harvey Milk was christened and represented a significant step toward inclusivity within the armed forces; *and*

WHEREAS: It is not lost on the public that the proposal to rename the USNS Harvey Milk comes during Pride Month - the monthlong observance of the LGBTQ+ community that started with the anniversary of the Stonewall uprising of June 1969. The White House administration also set a deadline to force active-duty transgender service members to identify themselves and voluntarily leave the military on June 6th, last Friday; *and*

WHEREAS: Other Navy ships that are being considered to be renamed include USNS Thurgood Marshall, USNS Ruth Bader Ginsburg - ships named after the first Black Supreme Court Justice Marshall and the late Supreme Court Justice Ginsburg; the USNS Harriet Tubman, USNS Lucy Stone - ships named after the famous abolitionists; and USNS Medgar Evers and USNS Cesar Chavez - ships named after important civil rights leaders. These ships' names serve as reminders of the transformative work they have dedicated to our country; *and*

WHEREAS: All of these ships are John Lewis-class replenishment oilers, designed to support Carrier Strike Groups at sea. This class of oiler ships is named after Congressman John Lewis, a revered and respected civil rights advocate. These oilers were named

by the then U.S. Navy Secretary Ray Mabus in 2016, in recognition of Gay and Civil Rights leaders; *and*

WHEREAS: Politics should have no place in our military. The current administration's approach to erasing names of important gay and civil rights trailblazers for our country is shameful and disappointing. Instead of strengthening our military and honoring our servicemen, military families and veterans, they are fueling division, forcing out those who are willing to serve, and cutting the Department of Veterans personnel and budget, and by extension - critical programs and services for our veterans and military families; *and*

WHEREAS: We must denounce these deliberate acts to rename our U.S. Navy Ships after well-known and esteemed historic figures who have fought for the advancement of LGBTQ+ and civil rights in our country. The legacies of LGBTQ+ pioneer Harvey Milk, Supreme Court Justices Thurgood Marshall and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Abolitionists Harriet Tubman and Lucy Stone, Civil Rights activists Medgar Evers and Cesar Chavez must be taught, honored and respected;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Boston City Council denounces the latest renaming of USNS Harvey Milk and other USNS ships that are under consideration for renaming, and calls for the White House to keep the names of these ships; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

That the Boston City Council commits to advocating and fighting for LGBTQ+, civil rights and human rights, especially for our U.S. servicemen, veterans, and military families.

Filed on: June 11, 2025