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*** PRESS RELEASE ***

MAYOR LEE, CITY DEPARTMENTS CELEBRATE ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

San Francisco, CA – Mayor Edwin M. Lee and City Departments today recognized the 27th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a landmark law that bars discrimination against any individual based on disability.

“San Francisco has a long history of fighting for equity and justice, so we are proud to recognize the anniversary of this civil rights milestone,” said Mayor Lee. “The Americans with Disabilities Act provided long overdue access, resources and support for the disability community. We are grateful to the many tireless advocates who fought for this legislation and continue to support equal rights for people with disabilities. In this City, we will always strive to go above and beyond what is required for our residents with disabilities.”

Mayor Lee has long prioritized measures to make services and facilities more equitable for persons with disabilities. Along with the Board of Supervisors, he supported the creation of the Dignity Fund, which was approved by voters last November. The Dignity Fund provides protected funding for programs serving San Francisco seniors and adults with disabilities. The Fund established a protected baseline of $38 million and it is projected to grow by $33 million over the next 10 years.

“The City and County of San Francisco has and always will be a strong advocate of the Americans with Disabilities Act,” said City Administrator Naomi Kelly. “As Chair of the Capital Planning Committee I'm proud of the commitments we have made and are continuing to make by improving accessibility for everyone.”

“It is core to the mission of the department to support adults with disabilities,” said Shireen McSpadden, Executive Director of the Department of Aging and Adult Services. “Each year, we serve one in three of the city’s 90,000 adults with disabilities. We look forward to continuing to work with Mayor Lee and the disability community to further develop programs that promote living in the most independent setting and provide opportunities for meaningful engagement.”

Under Mayor Lee’s leadership, approximately 400 apartment units have been upgraded to include features for residents with disabilities as part of the City’s Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD) program. During his tenure, Mayor Lee has also championed the Community Living Fund, which has provided $36 million to help support people living with disabilities stay within their neighborhood instead of moving to institutional settings.

Additionally, more than 600 small businesses have received Certified Access Specialist assessments to help businesses determine if their sites of operation are access-compliant. Businesses received customized action plans identifying the changes needed for their sites to become compliant and resources towards removing barriers to access. The Office of Economic and Workforce Development has awarded $200,000 towards improving entryways, bathrooms, tables and chairs, shelves, signage, and path of travel to access small business products and services.
“I am proud to be part of a City that takes such positives steps and shows such commitment to promoting accessibility for people with disabilities,” said Nicole Bohn, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Disability.

To make pedestrian crossings safe and accessible for all, the City has installed more than 25,000 curb ramps on city streets. The curb ramps allow for the shortest distances and the safest pedestrian crossings at the City’s busiest intersections.

“We are unwavering in our commitment to making San Francisco more accessible for all,” said Public Works Director Mohammed Nuru. “As part of that mission we have been installing more than 1,300 ADA-accessible curb ramps a year throughout our neighborhoods.”

Along with celebrating the 27th anniversary of the passage of the ADA, the City and County of San Francisco is also recognizing the 40th anniversary year of the 26-day occupation of the San Francisco Federal Building by people with disabilities. Those advocates helped push for implementation of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which was the ADA’s precursor.

To mark the 40th anniversary of that occupation, the San Francisco Public Library is currently hosting an exhibit called “Patient No More: People with Disabilities Secure Civil Rights.” The exhibit is on display at the Main Library through September 3. It is free and open to the public during library hours.

“We’re excited to showcase and celebrate these hard-fought civil rights,” said City Librarian Luis Herrera. “The exhibit at the Main Library is particularly powerful, as it not only shares the incredible story of the 504 sit-in by disability rights activists, but does it via displays that are accessible to all.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law on July 26, 1990, by President George H.W. Bush.