

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mayor Todd Gloria Announces New Appointments to City of San Diego's Boards and Commissions

NINETEEN APPOINTEES CONFIRMED ACROSS NINE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

SAN DIEGO – Following City Council approval, Mayor Todd Gloria recently announced these new appointments and reappointments to serve in key roles on the City's Boards and Commissions. Check the [Boards and Commissions webpage](#) to learn about vacancies and apply for a position.

Dustin DeMatteo was appointed to the Climate Advisory Board. DeMatteo is the director of sustainability and stewardship at the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance. He previously served as the sustainability manager for the City of Rohnert Park, where he led the development of a Climate Action and Adaptation Plan and advanced solar infrastructure and resource conservation. He received a bachelor's degree in environmental studies and planning from Sonoma State University and is being appointed to a two-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending Aug. 1, 2027, in the General Member District 9 Seat.

Ronald Diaz was appointed to the Climate Advisory Board. Diaz has served as a store manager at AutoZone since 2019, where he manages a team and optimizes store operations. He has also worked as a teacher assistant at Chula Vista High School. He holds a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering from San Diego State University (SDSU), where he developed a stormwater pollution prevention plan for the City of Solana Beach-Del Mar through his capstone project. He also holds an associate's degree in science in mathematics from Southwestern College. Diaz is being appointed to a two-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending Aug. 31, 2027, in the District 8 General Member Seat.

Adrian Baker-Kang was appointed to the Mobility Board. Baker-Kang's journey in sustainable transportation and community building began while he managed the 501(c)(3) Santa Cruz Bicycle Cooperative, where he discovered the transformative power of accessible mobility. This passion continued through his time with AmeriCorps City Year, where he founded the Bike Life Club for first-generation middle school students in East San Jose. His commitment to community development deepened during his Peace Corps service in Burkina Faso, where he developed women-led

entrepreneurship programs that expanded economic opportunities through community-centered approaches. Building on these experiences, he served on the Board of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington, the largest Returned Peace Corps Volunteer organization in the country, helping to facilitate re-entry for volunteers evacuated in 2020 due to COVID-19. Most recently, he has been volunteering with Bikes Del Pueblo, providing bicycle mechanics training and supporting community mobility initiatives. He is being appointed to a two-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending Feb. 1, 2026, in the District 3 Representative Seat.

Layla Al-Khafaji was appointed to the City of San Diego Youth Commission. Al-Khafaji is a junior at Mission Bay High School in Pacific Beach. She recently completed a summer internship with California State Assemblymember Tasha Boerner, during which she proposed a bill to ban single-use plastic utensils. She is co-president and founder of Safe Horizons Clubs at Mission Bay, which works to help support refugees in Mexico. Al-Khafaji has been involved with Model United Nations for over four years and is now co-president of her school's Model United Nations club. She is an active Boy Scout and an Eagle Candidate and competes on the varsity water polo team at Mission Bay and the club team at La Jolla United. She is being appointed to a two-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending July 1, 2026, in the Mayoral Representative Seat.

Rob Hixson was re-appointed to the Airports Advisory Committee. Hixson has served with CBRE for 39 years and works on both sides of the California-Baja California border, assisting landlords and tenants in entitling and developing land and buildings in the California-Baja California border areas, as well as with investments and land for sale. He serves as chair of the Otay Mesa Planning Group and vice chair of the East Otay Mesa Property Owners Association. He is being appointed to a four-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending Feb. 28, 2029, in the Otay Mesa Representative Seat.

Jason Ponchetti was re-appointed to the Airports Advisory Committee. Ponchetti is the general manager of Air Center San Diego. As such, he is responsible for the overall management and development of the City's newest fixed-base operator, including fueling services, ground handling, hangar management and customer service. Prior to this role, he served as the portfolio manager at General Atomics, where he was responsible for managing owned real estate assets at the Torrey Pines campus. Ponchetti holds a Bachelor of Arts in behavior sciences from Metropolitan State University of Denver and a Master of Business Administration from the University of Denver. He is being appointed to a four-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending Feb. 28, 2029, in the Brown Field Aviation Lessees Representative Seat.

Dr. LaWana Richmond was appointed to the Consolidated Plan Advisory Board. Dr. Richmond serves as executive director and co-founder of Grioneers, Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to engineering the future through storytelling, education and community innovation through an Afrofuturism lens. She is also the visionary behind the Afrofuturism Lounge, an annual cultural and creative convening held during San Diego Comic-Con that highlights Black creators and explores the intersections of imagination,

technology and social progress. Her career spans over two decades, with experience in higher education, operations management and community engagement. She holds a doctorate in educational leadership from a UC San Diego and Cal State San Marcos joint program, a master's degree in information systems from National University and a bachelor's degree in business administration with an emphasis in operations management from SDSU. Dr. Richmond is being appointed to a two-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending July 1, 2027, in the District 4 Representative Seat.

Bernadette Butkiewicz was appointed to the Mission Bay Park Committee. Butkiewicz is a senior public affairs manager with San Diego Gas and Electric. A resident of Clairemont, Butkiewicz obtained a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Sonoma State University. She is being appointed to a two-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending June 30, 2027, in the District 2 Representative Seat.

James Gross was appointed to the Mission Bay Park Committee. Gross is the general manager of the Paradise Point Resort and Spa and an active member of the Mission Bay Lessees Association. He is being reappointed to a two-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending June 30, 2026, in the Hotel Lessee Seat.

Giovanni Ingolia was appointed to the Mission Bay Park Committee. Ingolia is an independent insurance broker certified in Medicare, Covered California and federal insurance markets. He is also the owner and operator of All American Carpet Cleaning. Ingolia served on the Ocean Beach Planning Board for eight years, the Ocean Beach Town Council for two years and on the Ocean Beach Community Plan Update Subcommittee. He holds a Bachelor of Science in geography/urban planning with a minor in political science from Illinois State University and a professional certificate in urban planning from UC San Diego. He is being reappointed to a two-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending June 30, 2027, in the District 2 Representative Seat.

Jeff Johnson was appointed to the Mission Bay Park Committee. Johnson is a seasoned professional with extensive experience in public service, event advocacy and technology. As the co-founder of Aeon Computing, he focuses on high-performance computing solutions. He is a board member of the San Diego Event Coalition, working to enhance regulations and support for the event industry. His prior experience includes leadership roles as president and CTO at Western Scientific, Inc., first vice president of the Old Mission Beach Athletic Club and service as a sergeant in the United States Marine Corps, specializing in ground electronics and radio repair. He is being reappointed to a two-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending June 30, 2027, in the At-Large Seat.

Ryan Karlsgodt was appointed to the Mission Bay Park Committee. Karlsgodt is a senior associate at Strategies 360. Previously, he served as a research analyst for UNITE HERE! Local 30, San Diego's hotel and hospitality workers union, where he was responsible for coalition building. He previously served in the Obama Administration in the White House Office of Presidential Personnel, where he helped coordinate political appointments. In the last two years of the Obama Administration, Karlsgodt was a

presidential appointee in the Office of Global Climate Change at the U.S. Agency for International Development. He is being reappointed to a two-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending June 30, 2027, in the At-Large Seat.

Catherine Jolley Umemoto was appointed to the Mission Bay Park Committee. Umemoto is an educator, advocate and long-time resident of Pacific Beach. She is the vice president and former president of the Pacific Beach Town Council. She taught kindergarten with the El Cajon Valley School District for over 30 years and received her master's degree in education from SDSU. She is being appointed to a two-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending June 30, 2027, in the At-Large Seat.

Kasey Cheal was appointed to the Senior Affairs Advisory Board. Cheal is a healthcare leader with over 19 years of experience in home care services. She is the founder and CEO of United Care, a care agency that provides individualized care programs and continuity for clients in San Diego. Her expertise encompasses staffing, compliance, scheduling, billing, client relations community, engagement and care coordination, with a focus on delivering client-centered care to seniors and individuals with special needs. Cheal holds several licenses and certifications, including certified dementia practitioner and certified Alzheimer's disease and dementia care trainer from the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners. She also completed the empowering aging program through Connect Our Elders and serves as a community residential care facility administrator certified by the California Department of Social Services. She holds an Associate of Science and an Associate of Arts and Sciences from San Diego Miramar College and is a certified nursing assistant.

David Bock was appointed to the Municipal Golf Committee. Bock is an attorney with significant experience in the legal and veterinary industries. He graduated cum laude from California Western School of Law and began his career as a judicial extern at the United States Attorney's Office. He then joined an AmLaw 100 national law firm, focusing on complex employment defense cases. After several years in litigation, Bock transitioned to in-house counsel for a nationwide veterinary medicine leader, where he currently serves as senior counsel, managing the Employment and Litigation Department across 48 states and four countries. He has played a key role in addressing legal challenges and ensuring compliance with employment and healthcare laws. Additionally, he volunteers his legal expertise to small businesses in the art community and is actively involved in the San Diego golf community through various clubs, including the Admiral Baker Men's Golf club. He is being appointed to a four-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending May 1, 2029.

Sabrina Bazzo was appointed to the Human Relations Commission. Bazzo currently serves as executive director for the San Diego Academy of Family Physicians, advocating for high-quality patient care. She was elected to the San Diego Unified School Board in November 2020 and served as board president in 2023. Additionally, she serves as a member of the Audit and Finance Committee and actively engages in local and statewide education policy as a delegate to the California School Boards Association and on the

Executive Board of Directors of the Council of Great City Schools. She is being appointed to a four-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending July 22, 2026, in the District 6 Representative Seat

Edwin Lohr was appointed to the Human Relations Commission. Lohr has dedicated over 30 years to advancing equity and community cohesion in San Diego's neighborhoods. His extensive volunteer work includes serving as president of the North Park Community Association, vice president of the Stonewall Citizens Patrol and member of the Mid-City Chief's Advisory Committee, among other roles. A military veteran, Lohr worked at the San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau and founded the San Diego Professional Tour Guide Association, promoting local tourism and cross-cultural understanding. He is being appointed to a four-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending July 22, 2027, in the Mayoral Appointee Seat.

Abdifatah Moalim was appointed to the Human Relations Commission. Moalim serves as an associate at Amazon DSD5. He has played a key role in fulfillment operations, ensuring both efficiency and accuracy while collaborating with team members to meet performance goals. Prior to this, he supported warehouse operations at Amazon SDA4, where he excelled in inventory management and order processing while adhering to safety protocols. In his previous role as backup lead for the night shift at ABM SDA4, he supervised employees, ensured cleaning standards were met and effectively managed workflow to maximize efficiency. He is being appointed to a four-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending July 22, 2028, in the Mayoral Appointee Seat.

Rickie Brown was appointed to the Human Relations Commission. Brown serves as the property manager of the Hollywood Palms apartment complex. As a well-known community activist in City Heights, she led an advocacy group by lobbying in Sacramento around local disparities in City Heights and particularly encouraging more affordable housing in the state. Currently, she sits on the Executive Board for the San Diego County Democrats for Equality and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Democratic Club. She is also a past member of the City Heights Redevelopment Project Area Committee, City Heights Area Planning Committee, City Heights Town Council and the Citizens Police Review Board. She's being reappointed to a four-year term, and completing the seat's current term ending July 22, 2029, in the Mayoral Appointee Seat.



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