

PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE TO ITEM 16-1065

New Items Agenda 1/13/2016

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

Sponsored by: JESÚS G. GARCÍA, County Commissioner

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE DIGNIFIED TREATMENT OF CENTRAL AMERICAN ASYLUM SEEKERS

WHEREAS, Cook County is a “Fair and Equal County for Immigrants,” as defined in 07-R-240; and

WHEREAS, Cook County is home to over one million immigrants with residents from Latin America, Asia, Europe and Africa; and

WHEREAS, Cook County has benefitted culturally, socially and economically from the diversity of its residents; and

WHEREAS, the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have some of the world’s highest rates of violence, causing a refugee crisis; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of thousands of Central Americans have been displaced by endemic violence, the majority of whom are women and children; and

WHEREAS, Violence against women and children is pervasive and the Central American governments have failed to protect their citizens; and

WHEREAS, The number of asylum applications from Central American countries to neighboring countries has increased thirteen fold since 2008; and

WHEREAS, Families and Children, most without access to legal counsel have received removal orders without having meaningful opportunities to explain their need for legal protection to an immigration judge; and

WHEREAS, Many of these families and children may be eligible for immigration reprieve if they are allowed to present their cases to the Board of Immigration Appeals; and

WHEREAS, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) began conducting raids during the 2016 New Year’s holiday targeting Central American families fleeing violence and children as young as four-years-old; and

WHEREAS, Central American asylum seekers should be treated with the dignity, care and compassion that every person deserves; and

WHEREAS, immigration raids perpetuate pervasive fear within Cook County, sow distrust of local law enforcement and raise concerns regarding civil rights violations; and

WHEREAS, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) recent raids threatens the health of the immigrant community and all Cook County residents by creating an atmosphere of fear and distrust of governmental authority; and

WHEREAS, These raids violate basic human rights and threaten the health of all Cook County Residents in addition to immigrant communities by disrupting clinical, public health and public safety services as recognized by the American Public Health Association; and

WHEREAS, ICE raids create unnecessary stress and trauma and re-enforce a policy of structural racism that isolates immigrants; and

WHEREAS, Cook County Ordinance 11-O-73 sets out a policy outlining the proper boundaries of the relationship between Cook County personnel and officials and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board Of Commissioners hereby reaffirm its commitment to remain a safe place for residents of Cook County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners hereby denounces such raids and urges local law enforcement to abide by existing laws governing interaction with ICE including Cook County Ordinance 11-O-73.