

STATEMENT ON "BLACK AND BROWN LIVES MATTER" AGENDA OF COOK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Dear Commissioners:

Get Cleared, Illinois, the campaign of the Monroe Foundation to "Break the Generational Cycle of Recidivism", applauds the submittal of a Resolution for the re-directing of monies from Cook County Law Enforcement to address the inequities in health, jobs, housing, and other socio-economic factors that contributes to racial disparities and unrest.

However, the Cook County Board of Commissioners, the Cook County State's Attorney, the Office of the Chief Judge, we urge that the Criminal Justice Committee in today's convening, must additionally consider the redirection of law enforcement monies to eliminate and address the substantial filing backlog experienced within the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court in moving petitions for sealing and expungement through the judicial system.

Further, we recommend additional support to the Office of the Cook County State's Attorney for the purpose of assigning more staff to review and respond to petitions more timely.

We further, and most urgently, recommend additional support to the Office of the Chief Judge that will allow for the assignment of an additional judge(s) to the calendar, resulting in petition rulings becoming more effectively and efficiently decided, and enabling the formerly incarcerated who are eligible for sealing or expungement, to move forward with their lives and less "at-risk" of recidivism, waiting over a year for a court date and months more for a decision.....THIS HAS TO END!

Any Resolution or action by the Cook County Board of Commissioners in today's Criminal Justice Committee that does not address these "systems gaps", is essentially not a commitment to justice equity that minimizes the barriers to obtaining a "second chance" for the individuals that seek it and the advocates that mobilizes for it.

Lastly, please remember that the formerly incarcerated in Cook County can vote, and we will be watching today's virtual proceedings, and they will mobilize, with their voter cards, to push for these recommendations, leading into YOUR next election.

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