



**Board of Commissioners of Cook County
Minutes of the Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations Committee**

3:00 PM

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

**Cook County Building, Board Room,
118 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois**

ATTENDANCE

Present: Britton, Degnen, Aguilar, Daley, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, K. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (12)

Absent: Anaya (excused), Gainer, Moore (excused), Morita (excused) and S. Morrison (excused) (5)

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Chairman Britton asked the Secretary to the Board to call upon the registered public speakers, in accordance with Cook County Code.

There were no public speakers

24-5181

COMMITTEE MINUTES

Approval of the minutes from the meeting of 07/22/2024

A motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Degnen, seconded by Commissioner Trevor, to approve 24-5181. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Britton, Degnen, Aguilar, Daley, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, K. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (12)

Absent: Anaya, Gainer, Moore, Morita and S. Morrison (5)

24-4199

Presented by: TONI PRECKWINKLE, President, Cook County Board of Commissioners

PROPOSED APPOINTMENT

Appointee(s): Patricia N. Jjemba

Position: Member

Department/Board/Commission: Juvenile Temporary Detention Center Advisory Board

Effective date: Immediate

Expiration date: 9/19/2027, members shall serve a term of three (3) years

A motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Degnen, seconded by Commissioner Aguilar, to recommend for approval 24-4199. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Britton, Degnen, Aguilar, Daley, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, K. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (12)

Absent: Anaya, Gainer, Moore, Morita and S. Morrison (5)

24-4243

Sponsored by: MONICA GORDON, Cook County Board of Commissioners

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THAT THE ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY APPROVE SB3948, AN AMENDMENT TO THE MISSING PERSONS IDENTIFICATION ACT

WHEREAS, each year, over 600,000 individuals go missing in the United States; and, while many missing children and adults are quickly found alive and well, tens of thousands of individuals remain missing for more than a year - what many agencies consider "cold cases". On any given day in the United States, there are approximately 90,000 active missing person cases in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC); and

WHEREAS, regardless of the reason for the disappearance, family and friends of the missing person experience trauma that motivates them to determine what has happened to a missing loved one; and

WHEREAS, among many tools utilized by law enforcement agencies during investigations, the collection of DNA or biological samples from two or more close biological relatives of the missing person helps with searching against the profiles of unidentified persons and remains in the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS); and

WHEREAS, managed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), CODIS is the FBI's program of support for criminal justice DNA databases, as well as the software used to run these databases. CODIS operates on three levels: The Local DNA Index System (LDIS), which is used by city and county laboratories, the State DNA Index System (SDIS) where profiles from laboratories across the State can be compared, and the National DNA Index System (NDIS), where profiles from laboratories across the country can be compared; and

WHEREAS; the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System, or NamUs, is the national information clearinghouse and resource center for missing, unidentified, and unclaimed person cases throughout the United States. Administered by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), an agency of the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), the NamUs program brings people, information, forensic science, and technology together to help resolve missing and unidentified person cases across the country; and

WHEREAS, Illinois Senate Bill 3948 ("SB3948") is a legislative initiative of the Cook County Sheriff, Thomas J. Dart, recently introduced by Senator Michael E. Hastings during the 103rd General Assembly, that amends the Missing Persons Identification Act and seeks to streamline processes in the investigation of missing and unidentified persons. Amongst other changes, the bill removes a time constraining provision to allow a law enforcement agency to attempt to obtain a DNA sample belonging to the missing person or directly from the missing person's family members in a more efficient manner; and

WHEREAS, SB3948 requires, rather than allows, follow up action by law enforcement to collect additional information, such as fingerprints and biological samples, to find the missing person; and

WHEREAS, SB3948 provides that a law enforcement agency may not observe any waiting period before accepting a missing person report, removes provisions prohibiting refusal of acceptance of missing persons reports based on lack of personal knowledge or for any other reason, and adds provisions about multiple reports for the same missing person; and

WHEREAS, SB3948 also provides that law enforcement generate a report of the missing person within NamUs, attempt to obtain specified information and materials that have not been received, and requires the responding local law enforcement agency to enter all collected information relating to the missing person case in the Law Enforcement Agencies Data System (LEADS) and the National Crime Information Center among many other amendments that will help law enforcement and investigative agencies working on missing or unidentified person's cases; and

WHEREAS, SB3948 expands searches for fingerprints of unidentified persons to include civil and federal databases, in hopes of also identifying persons who have no criminal history; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Sheriff's Office has a long history of prioritizing missing and unidentified person cases by ensuring best practices are utilized, including the appropriate use of forensic methods like DNA technology and databases. This started with Burr Oak in the summer of 2009 when the Sheriff's Office investigated the desecration of hundreds of graves by cemetery employees, and in 2010, by exposing the appalling burial practices of the indigent, unclaimed, and unidentified which prevented law enforcement from locating missing persons. Since 2011, the Sheriff's Office has identified 3 of the remaining 8 unidentified victims found in John Wayne Gacy's crawl space while in the process also closing 11 other unrelated cold cases. In September 2021, the Sheriff's Office launched the Missing Person Project to concentrate our efforts on locating individuals who have been missing for three or more years, particularly women, throughout the state of Illinois. So far, this project has removed 35 women from NamUs; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners recently held a public hearing of the Criminal Justice Committee to discuss and receive an update from the Public Safety and Public Health County stakeholders on the investigations of missing and murdered Black women and girls in the Chicagoland area; and

WHEREAS, the passage of SB3948 will greatly impact the current and future investigations of all missing and unidentified persons in Cook County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby request that the Illinois General Assembly approve SB3948, thus amending the Missing Persons Identification Act as soon as possible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners hereby direct the Cook County Clerk to transmit a copy of this resolution to IL Senator Michael E. Hastings, sponsor of SB3948; IL Representative Emanuel Welch, Speaker of the House; IL Senator Don Harmon, President of the Senate and IL Governor JB Pritzker.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gordon, seconded by Vice Chairwoman Degnen, to recommend for approval 24-4243. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Britton, Degnen, Aguilar, Daley, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, K. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (12)

Absent: Anaya, Gainer, Moore, Morita and S. Morrison (5)

24-4300

Sponsored by: MONICA GORDON, Cook County Board Of Commissioners

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

**URGING CONGRESS TO APPROVE THE PROTECT OUR LETTER CARRIERS ACT
(H.R. 7629)**

WHEREAS, earlier this month, postal worker Octavia Redmond lost her life after being shot while working on her route in the West Pullman area of Chicago. According to media reports, the killer may have trailed Redmond before attacking her. Redmond had delivered mail along the block where she was shot for around two years; and

WHEREAS, there has been growing concern about an increase in crimes against postal workers. The number of postal carriers robbed in 2023 rose from the previous year and the number of injuries nearly doubled, despite USPS pledging a crackdown. Since 2020, there have been more than 2,000 attempted or actual robberies and assaults against postal workers nationwide; and

WHEREAS, in March of this year, Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-1) and Greg Landsman (OH-1) introduced the Protect our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 7629), a bipartisan legislation that addresses the rise of violent crime committed against letter carriers as they carry out their duties; and

WHEREAS, if approved, the bill would: address the outdated collection boxes and arrow keys, which letter carriers are often targeted for in robberies; ensure that the Department of Justice appropriately prosecutes crimes committed against letter carriers through designating an assistant in every U.S. Attorney's office to coordinate and supervise the investigation and prosecution of alleged offenses committed against letter carriers; and amend sentencing guidelines so that any assault or robbery committed against a letter carrier has a more severe sentence recommendation; and

WHEREAS, the approval of H.R. 7629 will play a meaningful role in hardening targets like mailboxes and electronic arrow keys, protecting our letter carriers and strengthening public safety; and

WHEREAS, our nation's letter carriers work hard around the clock, rain or shine, dutifully delivering medications, checks, ballots, packages, and other essential mail that all Americans depend on.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby urge Congress to move swiftly to approve the Protect our Letter Carriers Act (H.R. 7629) to enhance our postal workers safety; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners hereby direct the Cook County Clerk to transmit a copy of this resolution to Reps. Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-1) and Greg Landsman (OH-1), sponsors of the measure; the Illinois' Congressional delegation; the House Speaker and Minority Leader; the Senate Majority Leader and Minority Leader; and the White House.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gordon, seconded by Vice Chairwoman Degnen, to recommend for approval 24-4300. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Britton, Degnen, Aguilar, Daley, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, K. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (12)

Absent: Anaya, Gainer, Moore, Morita and S. Morrison (5)

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Vice Chairwoman Degnen, seconded by Commissioner Trevor, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried by the following vote:


Ayes: Britton, Degnen, Aguilar, Daley, Gordon, Lowry, Miller, K. Morrison, Quezada, Scott, Stamps and Trevor (12)

Absent: Anaya, Gainer, Moore, Morita and S. Morrison (5)

Respectfully submitted,



Chairman



Secretary

A complete record of this meeting is available at <https://cook-county.legistar.com>.

