

**PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE TO FILE 23-3725**  
**(New Items Agenda 6/29/2023)**

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS AND THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTHCARE AND FAMILY SERVICES (HFS) TO NOT PAUSE THE HEALTH BENEFITS FOR IMMIGRANT ADULTS (HBIA) PROGRAM THIS JULY 1**

**WHEREAS**, Cook County has historically been home to the highest concentration of immigrants throughout the State of Illinois, with foreign-born persons making up nearly a quarter of Cook County's population; and

**WHEREAS**, immigrants continue to strengthen our economy by growing businesses, creating jobs, and paying taxes in Cook County, Illinois; and

**WHEREAS**, one in seven Illinois residents is an immigrant, while one in eight is a native-born U.S. citizen with at least one immigrant parent; and

**WHEREAS**, immigrants have provided the United States, Illinois, and Cook County with unique social and cultural influence, fundamentally enriching the extraordinary character of our nation, state and county; and

**WHEREAS**, immigrants have been tireless leaders not only in securing their own rights and access to equal opportunity, but have also campaigned to create a fairer and more just society for all Cook County residents; and

**WHEREAS**, immigrants have provided vital contributions to protect our health & safety and keep life moving forward during the COVID-19 world pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, nearly 20 million immigrants are part of the essential workforce, which includes workers in the healthcare, agricultural, food & beverage, grocery, and retail fields -- all of whom the United States of America has relied on during this ongoing worldwide pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, despite these countless contributions, the role of immigrants in building and enriching the United States has frequently been overlooked and undervalued throughout our history and continuing to the present day; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cook County Board of Commissioners is proud to represent a diverse constituency and works with a variety of community leaders to ensure that the voices of Cook County residents from all backgrounds are heard; and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County Health has aided our immigrant county residents by enrolling them to the Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults (HBIA) and Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors (HBIS) programs, which combined have provided life-saving healthcare to over 50,000 immigrants in Illinois since 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, the tens of thousands of Cook County residents that have enrolled in HBIA and HBIS have received critical medical care from the Cook County Health system; and

**WHEREAS**, on June 16, 2023, HFS published a notice that enrollment will be paused for healthcare coverage for Illinois immigrants ages 42-64 under the HBIA program; and

**WHEREAS**, there are residents who will have to forgo cancer treatment, diabetes care, mental health care, and other kinds of necessary medical treatment with the pause of this program; and

**WHEREAS**, Black immigrants and immigrants of color are disproportionately impacted by policies that create barriers to receiving public benefits.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Cook County President and the Board of Commissioners do hereby urge the Governor and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services to not pause the program on July 1, and to work with advocates & members of the Illinois General Assembly to fully fund the program and expand it; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that suitable copies shall be sent to Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker and Illinois HFS Director Theresa Eagleson. |