

# #1

**COMPLETE**

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## Q1

Please provide some basic information

Witness Name:	<b>Malcolm Rich</b>
Organization (if any):	<b>Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts</b>
City/Town:	<b>Chicago, IL</b>
State:	<b>IL</b>
ZIP:	<b>60611</b>

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## Q2

**County Board Special Meeting 3/12/2021 10a**

Tell us which meeting you wish to be recorded as a witness. If you don't know the meeting or date, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar. Please fill out a separate form for each meeting at which you wish to speak.

## Q3

Tell us the File ID number (example 17-0000) of the item on which you are registering your position. If you don't know the number, we can help at 312.603.6398 or [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov). You can also look it up using the County Calendar or the Forest Preserve Calendar

21-2052

## Q4

**REGISTER IN FAVOR of a specific item (You may add written comments below)**

What do you want to do?

## Q5

Written Statement? You can type or copy/paste any written statement you want included in the meeting record here. If this is not enough space, or you have other attachments for distribution, please email them to [cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:cookcounty.board@cookcountyil.gov)

Chicago Council of Lawyers and Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts congratulate Sharone Mitchell on his selection as the next Cook County Public Defender and urge the Cook County Board to approve his nomination on March 12.

As a lifelong resident of Chicago, Mr. Mitchell has a deep dedication to improving accessible, fair, and effective justice in Cook County. Before joining the Illinois Justice Project in 2016, he was a Grade 3 front-line trial attorney with the Cook County Public Defender's Office, where he handled cases ranging from misdemeanors to complex felonies. During his seven years in the office, Mr. Mitchell tried hundreds of bench and jury trials in the criminal division, as well as practicing in the civil division and 1st Municipal District courts.

As Director of the Illinois Justice Project, Mr. Mitchell led one of the most well-respected criminal justice policy nonprofits in the state. His work over the years has focused on sentencing policy, violence prevention, public defense, and pretrial issues. In collaboration with the Coalition to End Money Bond, Mr. Mitchell played an indispensable role in shaping and passing the Pretrial Fairness Act (a component of HB 3653). Mr. Mitchell drew on his years of experience as a public defender and a policy advocate to focus the Coalition on creating a new, fairer pretrial system that would work in practice in Illinois Courts.

Mr. Mitchell has been a tireless advocate for justice whose dedication to fairness and equity has created tangible changes in Illinois' criminal legal system. He has often appeared in the media to speak about issues of injustice: his analysis has appeared in print, TV, and radio, and commentary was featured on the WBEZ podcast "16 Shots," about the police murder of LaQuan McDonald. He is eminently well-qualified to be the next Cook County Public Defender. Mr. Mitchell has a tireless commitment to the interests of people harmed by the criminal justice system. His passion, commitment, and temperament make him the ideal person to lead the Public Defenders' office to new heights.

For several years, Mr. Mitchell has been involved in the collaborative work of Chicago Appleseed and the Chicago Council of Lawyers. Currently serving as a member of our Board of Directors, he started as a co-chair of our Criminal Justice Advisory Committee. In addition to serving on Chicago Appleseed's Board of Directors, Sharone Mitchell is on the Associates Board of Chicago Debates, the organization that facilitates high school policy debate in the Chicagoland area, and the Board of St. Leonard's Ministries, an organization providing comprehensive residential, case management, and employment services for those released from prison without resources.

His progressive vision for reform of the Illinois criminal legal system, which he has advanced with the Illinois Justice Project, is welcome and long overdue. The Council and Chicago Appleseed are proud to work with Mr. Mitchell to advance the Pretrial Fairness Act, eliminating cash bail, and other sorely needed legislative reforms that passed the legislature in January.

We know that as Public Defender of Cook County, Mr. Mitchell will continue to work tirelessly for justice reforms that benefit those involved in the system throughout Cook County and Illinois.

As a former Assistant Public Defender, Mr. Mitchell has the background and relationships to connect with the current staff of the Office of the Public Defender, support morale, build trust. We also are confident that Mr. Mitchell has the skills, temperament and diplomacy necessary to work with all the other system players, including the State's Attorney, Office of the Chief Judge, and Clerk of the Circuit Court.

We enthusiastically endorse Mr. Mitchell's nomination and encourage the Board to vote yes.

**Q6**

**Submitting written testimony only**

Please Indicate if you are only submitting written testimony or if you wish to address the Committee live (virtually) at the meeting.

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**Q7**

**Respondent skipped this question**

If requesting to address the Committee live (virtually), please provide an email address and phone number (This is required to receive and an invitation to the virtual meeting).

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