



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 22-3367, Version: 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING J. IVY

WHEREAS, J. Ivy is an award-winning poet, author, actor, and philanthropist who exemplifies the spirit of excellence, perseverance, and creativity in Cook County; and

WHEREAS, J. Ivy was born on the South Side of Chicago on March 3, 1976, to WVON radio personality James Ivy Richardson and Pamela Richardson, a registered nurse who served at Cook County Hospital; and, as a child the family, along with two brothers, Virgil, and Sergio, relocated to the south suburbs; and

WHEREAS, he lost a third brother, Demond, to gun violence in 1988, sparking his commitment to eradicating the apathy, despair and hopelessness that ensnared far too many of his peers; and

WHEREAS, in 1994 J. Ivy, graduated from Rich Central High School in Olympia Fields, and attended Illinois State University where he majored in marketing and worked various jobs while daring to dream big; and

WHEREAS, J. Ivy's poetry and storytelling styles were influenced by Gil Scott-Heron, The Last Poets, Hip Hop musician Slick Rick, Illinois Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks, as well as civil rights champion Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who inspired him to demonstrated speaking truth to power; and, in 2001 he received his big break when he performed, "I Need to Write" on HBO's Def Poetry Jam, which earned him a Peabody Award; and

WHEREAS, J. Ivy's career attracted more recognition when he wrote and was featured on the single, "Never Let Me Down," on Kanye West's four times platinum, Grammy Award-winning album College Dropout, featuring Jay Z; and, he was credited with giving EGOT winner singer/songwriter John Stephens his moniker, "John Legend;" and

WHEREAS, J. Ivy married Chicago, native singer/songwriter Tarrey Torae in 2005, and together they wrote and produced the album "For Better or Worse," and, he also recorded solo albums, "Down at Loose Skillet" (2001), "Here I Am" (2010), "My Daddy's Records" (2017) and, "Digging in Papes: The Mixtape" (2014); and

WHEREAS, he has written three best-selling books "Poetically Black: Ivy in the Making" (1995), "Here I Am" (2012) and "Dear Father: Breaking the Cycle of Pain" (2015, Simon & Schuster); and, after being commissioned by NBA champion Michael Jordan and Dr. Deepak Chopra, in 2020 he wrote and narrated Beyoncé's "Black Is King" promo for "Return of the NBA" which won a Clio award-winning for innovation and creative excellence; and

WHEREAS, in 2022 J. Ivy received a Grammy nomination for his fifth studio album "Catching Dreams: Live at Fort Knox Chicago," which was nominated in the category of "Best Spoken Word Album," alongside actors

Levar Burton, Don Cheadle, comedian Dave Chappelle, poet Amir Suliman, and former President Barack Obama; and

WHEREAS, J. Ivy has also been awarded by national and local organizations, including receiving two NAACP Image recognitions (for documentaries “Muhammad Ali People’s Champ;” and “Martin: The Legacy of a King;”) both of which aired on Black Entertainment Television; and

WHEREAS, J. Ivy was the lead writer, voice director, and cast member of the record-breaking Netflix documentary “jeen-yuhs: A Kanye West Trilog” directed by Coodie and; Chike; and, after serving as the Recording Academy’s Chicago chapter president for two years, in 2021 he became the youngest person to serve as a national trustee thus becoming the first poet in the history of the Academy to hold those positions; and

WHEREAS, he also serves as resident poet Ernie Barnes Foundation; and he is a member of the Screen Actors Guild, the Writers’ Guild; and

WHEREAS, J. Ivy devotes considerable time to speaking to students, aspiring artists and disadvantaged youth, and other marginalized communities throughout Cook County, the State of Illinois, and the nation; and he also mentors; and

WHEREAS, J. Ivy is a recognized advocate for mental health and suicide prevention nothing that both his works, “Never Let Me Down” and “Dear Father” have been credited by scores of people as the reason they resisted self-harm or suicide; and his work with the fatherless to reduce depression and tap into the power of forgiveness, leading many to reconnect with their dads and to change their lives; and

WHEREAS, J. Ivy continues his commitment to education, excellence, and community service as a resident of Richton Park, IL;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, we the Cook County Board of Commissioners hereby acknowledge and recognize the contributions of Cook County resident---son, husband, poet, author, songwriter, actor J. Ivy and we thank him for his commitment to excellence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, May 12, 2022, be hereby declared as “J. Ivy Day” in Cook County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, that this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that a suitable copy be presented to J. Ivy as a symbol of our respect and esteem.