



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 23-4958, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF RIGOBERTO “RIGO” PADILLA PÉREZ

WHEREAS, Rigoberto “Rigo” Padilla Pérez lived a beautiful life filled with friends and family. Unfortunately, he lost his fight against brain cancer on August 20, 2023; and

WHEREAS, Rigo was born on February 11, 1988, in Jalisco, Mexico to Rigoberto Padilla Moreno and Juana Perez Muñoz; and

WHEREAS, Rigo grew up in West Town and Gage Park where much of his adolescence was spent at the Erie Neighborhood House which is a local center located in the neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, since 2009, Rigo had been directly involved in the support of undocumented communities; and

WHEREAS, Rigo attended Noble Street Charter High School where he played soccer, rugby, and cross country; and

WHEREAS, upon graduating, he attended Harold Washington College and the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) where he would eventually become one of the most prominent leaders of the immigrant rights movement in Chicago and across the country; and

WHEREAS, Rigo received both a Master of Art and a Bachelor's Degree in Latin America and Latino Studies (LALS) from UIC; and

WHEREAS, the once shy and introverted young man continued to find his voice at Radio Arte where he became part of a tight-knit community; and

WHEREAS, Rigo was stopped by an officer for a traffic violation and was turned over to Homeland Security; and

WHEREAS, Rigo would eventually face his own threat of deportation and fully establish himself as a force in the movement fighting not only for himself but for others facing similar cases across the country; and

WHEREAS, a founding member of the Immigration Youth Justice League (IYJL) (now known as Organized Communities Against Deportations - OCAD) he helped organize against the oppression and marginalization of immigrants and people of color; and

WHEREAS, Rigo was also a national leader for the DREAM Act, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and the expansion of protections and immigration relief for all; and

WHEREAS, Rigo, alongside others inspired an era of students who were undocumented, unapologetic and unafraid; and

WHEREAS, these efforts would also motivate him as a founding member of the Illinois Dream Fund, which provided

scholarships and resources to undocumented students striving for higher education; and

WHEREAS, the culmination of Rigo’s organizing would eventually land him at Eric Solorio Academy High School where he served as a College and Career Coach and Undocumented Student Support Specialist for 9 years; and

WHEREAS, at Solorio High School, Rigo founded the Dream Team and Solorio Dream Scholarship where one of the most powerful annual events is “Coming Out of the Shadows Day,” where undocumented students share their personal stories; and

WHEREAS, Rigo’s new mission became to ensure that students of color would obtain access to high-quality opportunities regardless of their socioeconomic and legal status; and

WHEREAS, in 2021 he was named a Surge Fellow by the Surge Institute, which recognizes young leaders of color.

WHEREAS, Rigo was a revolutionary, and an inspiration, as well as a hero for not only Chicago but for everyone across the country; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby hold in reverence in honor of the historic legacy of Rigoberto “Rigo” Padilla Pérez, as we offer our deepest condolences to his friends, family, and communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Rigoberto “Rigo” Padilla Pérez as an honorable expression of appreciation for his life and work.