



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION MEMORIALIZING CHICAGO'S 1966 AND 1977 DIVISION STREET "RIOTS" - THE DIVISION STREET PUERTO RICAN REBELLION

WHEREAS, Chicago's vibrant Puerto Rican community, comprised of 120,000 people, has grown as a stronghold for community organizing after two major events of civil unrest dubbed as the Division Street "riots" of 1966 and 1977, which were the result of its historical socio-economic political marginalization; and

WHEREAS, the Division Street riots were multiple days of civil urban rebellion between June 12-14, 1966 and June 4-5, 1977 in the "Greater Humboldt Park" communities of Humboldt Park, West Town, Hermosa and Logan Square; and

WHEREAS, tensions have been high within the Puerto Rican community during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s as they faced spatial de-concentration in the form of gentrification in Lincoln Park, Wicker Park, and Bucktown, housing discrimination based on the color of their skin and their ethnicity (as well as arson on properties for profit and red-lining), health inequity, high unemployment, police brutality, poor educational resources, and a sense of neglect, abandonment, and marginalization by the City of Chicago and local institutions; and

WHEREAS, on June 11, 1966, the inaugural Puerto Rican Parade took place in Chicago's downtown Loop, and that same day, a community member named Cruz Arcelis was shot by a white Chicago Police patrolman on Damen and Division Street. Community members gathered to help Mr. Arcelis with his injury while others came in immediate defense against the police officers involved; and on June 4, 1977, Rafael Cruz and Julio Osorio were assassinated by the Chicago police in Humboldt Park following the 11th Puerto Rican Parade downtown, and the Puerto Rican community once again rose up against this injustice and the overwhelming presence in the area of 500 policemen with canine dogs; and

WHEREAS, following both "riots," the community organized itself to address the plight of the Puerto Rican people in Chicago, the United States of America, and in the island of Puerto Rico; and in the case of the 1977, the incident that began the Puerto Rican People's Day Parade, which this year marked its 45th anniversary.

WHEREAS, in the 1966 case, a series of organizations were created, including the Spanish Action Committee of Chicago (SACC), the Northwest Community Organization, the First Congregational Church of Chicago (led by Jose A. Torres, the only Puerto Rican and Latino to march with Martin Luther King in Selma), and in Lincoln Park -- the Young Lords Organization (YLO) to address the plight of the Puerto Rican people in Chicago, the United States of America, and in the island of Puerto Rico; and

WHEREAS, after these Division Street "riots", the community has made progressive strides in achieving equity and the self-determination for the Puerto Rican people including the creation of Paseo Boricua, the cultural and commercial heartbeat of Puerto Rican Chicago, encased by the world largest flags of steel -- a monument to the Puerto Rican national emblem and now part of Chicago's Landmark legacy; but leaders still recognize that much of the factors that have incited the "riots" still remain.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County President and Board of Commissioners does hereby honor the 1966 and 1977 Division Street Puerto Rican uprising as a paramount event that helped further ethnic and racial equity in Cook County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County President and Board of Commissioners praise the county's Puerto Rican organizations for continuing their advocacy for a more just and equitable Cook County.