



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 21-0565, **Version:** 2

**PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE TO FILE 21-0565
(Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations Committee 10/5/2021)**

Sponsored by: BRANDON JOHNSON, Cook County Board of Commissioners

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

CELEBRATING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY AND RECONCILIATION DAY

WHEREAS, the County of Cook in the State of Illinois occupies territory that many Sovereign Nations, including the Council of Three Fires: Potawatomi, Ojibwe and Odawa, as well as Ho-Chunk, Miami, Sac and Fox, Peoria, Illini and others consider a part of their historical and modern-day homelands; and

WHEREAS, the Indigenous peoples of the Americas who were the original inhabitants of the land, experienced broken promises, violence, deprivation, and disease due to the acts of European colonizers; and

WHEREAS, Native Americans in Cook County make up the ninth largest Urban Native community in the country, a community that continues to practice their cultural traditions, caretaking of the land and educating others about their history and contemporary challenges; and

WHEREAS, Cook County acknowledges a responsibility to support diversity, equity and inclusion in all communities and this effort must acknowledge that Indigenous peoples were systematically removed from their homelands, maligned for their values and killed to provide economic opportunities to European colonizers; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples' Day was proposed to the United Nations in 1977 by an international delegation of Indigenous peoples' to inform the world about the negative impacts of colonization and the lasting pains of genocide committed against Native people, Cook County must reconcile the past and present harm and trauma perpetrated on Native people; and

WHEREAS, the land we call Cook County has always been home to Native Nations with vibrant cultural traditions and relationships to the land, and while long overdue, the Native Nations' many contributions to our present day society must be acknowledged to create a County where diversity, equity, healing and inclusion are the cornerstone of our modern-day culture; and

WHEREAS, Cook County recognizes our many different cultural groups, races, ethnicities as a source of strength, but many of these groups have faced prejudice, hate and violence, reconciliation to and for those groups is an important step towards healing, shared identity and unity; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples' Day and Reconciliation Day shall be an opportunity for celebration of Indigenous peoples' cultures and their contributions to our County, and as well as contributions from all communities that have faced prejudice; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners acknowledges the ongoing struggle for reconciliation, justice and citizenship for Freedmen of the four tribes previously referred to as “Civilized tribes”; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Indigenous Peoples’ Day and Reconciliation Day will be the Second Monday in October, replacing Columbus Day. On this holiday Cook County government remembers the mistreatment and acts of violence against Indigenous peoples’ and other groups of oppressed people, committing to education and sustained efforts towards ending the ongoing harm and trauma caused by present-day oppressive systems; and

BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED, that Indigenous Peoples’ Day and Reconciliation Day will lift-up the contributions that all cultures have made to enrich our county; and

BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners shall establish the following:

Section 1. A Native-led working group to explore the creation of a Reconciliation process, study the meaning of reconciliation, research different models of truth and reconciliation commissions, and understand the impact that such a process might have on Cook County and its residents. The objective of reconciliation is to navigate the racial healing process by documenting and addressing the harms that have perpetuated racial disparities by implementing specific solutions with a prioritized focus on healing.

Section 2. The Human Relations Committee is directed to lead a County-wide effort, in collaboration with Native leaders and other County departments to explore the formation of a truth and reconciliation process for Cook County.

Section 3. Within six (6) months, the Human Relations Committee will draft a definition of Indigenous Peoples’ Day and Reconciliation Day in connection with this Resolution to send along with a copy of this Resolution to every K-12 school district in Cook County to ensure that each school district will educate their students, staff, and families about the reason behind Cook County’s Indigenous Peoples’ Day and Reconciliation Day.