



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 20-3296, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **IN HONOR OF MOTHER HELEN SINCLAIR ON HER 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY**

**WHEREAS**, Mother Helen Sinclair celebrates her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday

**WHEREAS**, Mother Sinclair was born on July 14, 1920. She has served as a chaplain for the Illinois Department of Corrections for more than 40 plus years, ministering to incarcerated men for over 75 years, reminding them that they are still loved by God and they have a purpose to fulfill; and

**WHEREAS**, Mother Sinclair began her prison ministry, by following in the footsteps of her mother Jessie “Ma” Houston in Hot Springs Arkansas, after her stepbrother was arrested and later died in custody. It was then that her mother became the first African American woman to focus on ministering to prisoners; and

**WHEREAS**, After the family moved to Chicago in 1925, and Mother Sinclair started accompanying her mother on her inmate visits in 1945, at first just because her mother needed a ride; and

**WHEREAS**, Eventually Sinclair became not just her mother’s chauffeur but her partner in spreading the gospel and later would become an ordained minister.

**WHEREAS**, At the age of 60 Mother Helen Sinclair joined the Peace Corps. and served in Malawi, South Africa and a few year later earning her bachelor’s degree from Northeastern Illinois University. Through it all, her weekly prison visits continued where she developed programs that helped prison become places where inmates can transform their lives, not merely serve time; and

**WHEREAS**, Mother Sinclair has dedicated her life to ministering the inmates at correctional facilities like Stateville and others, she made it her mission to personally connect with every inmate and their families. She would drive for hours to visit each institution to conduct worship services, where she continued to focus on ways to reform the prison system; and

**WHEREAS**, at the age of 100 and Sunday after Sunday, despite her aging body and fragile memory, Mother Sinclair journey’s to state prisons to lead worship service, where she sings, offers prayer and teaches about black history and shouts words of encouragement. The inmates affectionately refer to her as Queen Mother and it’s a name that has been embraced by her entire family and community; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the residents of Cook County, hereby honor and recognize Queen Mother Helen Sinclair for her contribution to the viability of Cook County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that a suitable copy of this Resolution be tendered to Queen Mother Helen Sinclair as a means of communicating our appreciation