



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #: 21-1730, Version: 1**

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **HONORING SONIA SILVA ON HER 70TH BIRTHDAY AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE**

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva has been a community leader and example of compassion and dedication to those on the margins for the past 50 years; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva was born on December 28th, 1950 and raised her 4 children and six grandchildren as a single-parent; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva co-founded El Hogar del Niño in 1972 to serve the families and youth in Pilsen; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva co-founded Latino Youth in 1974, an alternative high school for those pushed out of the educational system; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva availed herself of an education-as a first generation college student-in child development at the University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago State University, and the School Service Administration at the University of Chicago where she learned the importance of advocating for systemic change at the policy-level; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva felt an enormous gratitude for the education she received and decided to pay it forward by working for Designs for Change, an educational research and reform organization; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva went on to work in the administration of the late, and great, Mayor Harold Lee Washington; first, in support of the Department of Personnel's goals on Affirmative Action and, second, in support of the Department of Human Services' reform of Title XX social service programs; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva continued her neighborhood-level civic engagement by becoming the Chief of Staff to Jesús G. "Chuy" García, then Alderman of Chicago's 22nd Ward, in 1989; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva became a national icon when she was elected in 1995 as the first Latina State Representative in Illinois; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva sponsored, co-sponsored and passed numerous legislative initiatives directed toward expanding educational funding; particularly the construction of 6 schools on the southwest side of Chicago, increasing access to healthcare statewide, and ensuring the State of Illinois' place as a national leader and model in securing immigrants' access to public services; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva became an electoral organizer and union organizer with SEIU and UNITE HERE Central States, respectively; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva earned her second Master's degree in Bilingual Education at Northern Illinois University; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva became a Chicago Public Schools bilingual elementary teacher at a school in the Back of the

Yards neighborhood; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva finished her career as a Hearing Officer and Contract Negotiator in Cook County's Department of Personnel; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva is an active advocate for the rights of the working class and immigrants; and

**WHEREAS**, we can all learn from Sonia Silva's compassion and dedication to helping communities realize their right to self-determination and empowerment; and

**WHEREAS**, Sonia Silva helped to inspire, challenge and support a whole new generation of community activists, organizers, and elected officials; and

**WHEREAS**, this year we celebrate the selfless and heartfelt contributions of Sonia Silva to her community and the dedication she continues to exert despite her official retirement.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby honor Sonia Silva on her 70th birthday and community leadership in the State of Illinois, the city of Chicago, and her home communities of Pilsen and Little Village and Chicago's greater southwest side; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this text be spread upon the proceedings of this Honorable Body and that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Sonia Silva in honor of this auspicious occasion.