



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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File #: 24-0433, Version: 1

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### PROPOSED RESOLUTION

#### HONORING THE YEARS OF DEDICATION & SERVICE OF COMPTROLLER LAWRENCE L. WILSON

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence L. Wilson has proudly devoted the past three decades serving the public sector, he enthusiastically began his public service career as a high school teacher within the Chicago Public School system. Lawrence was determined to improve the educational and economic trajectory of historically disenfranchised youth through guidance and mentorship, having attributed such resources as the catalyst behind his own success; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence succeeded in elevating the lives and opportunities for his students, he recognized the significance of obtaining an advanced degree to further extend his ability to serve others. Lawrence was the first in his immediate family to graduate from college and he earned a graduate degree from an Ivy League school. Lawrence worked two jobs and performed maintenance work to cover his tuition. Obtaining an MBA from Cornell University as a Black man in the early 1970s was fraught with discrimination and racism. However, Lawrence persevered, further prepared himself by receiving the Professional Accounting Program Certificate from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management, passing the CPA exam in 1979, and ultimately obtained prominent roles in public accounting, investment banking, consulting and executive leadership; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence launched his government finance career in 1986, when Mayor Harold Washington appointed him deputy comptroller. Lawrence continued to oversee all of Chicago's enterprises and accounting needs under the administrations of Mayors Sawyer and Daley respectively; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence served as deputy commissioner of finance in planning and development for the City of Chicago, a position he truly loved, because it resulted in commercial development which created and retained employment opportunities, revitalized local neighborhoods and provided loans, bonds and tax incentives to local businesses; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Illinois appointed Lawrence financial advisor for the City of East St. Louis, he implemented a balanced budget that took a city experiencing insolvency to financial solvency. East St. Louis received the first State Distressed Cities Act loan, which averted bankruptcy; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence expanded his professional portfolio into non-profit executive management, he served as senior vice president and chief financial officer for the American Heart Association; CFO for the Chicago Urban League; CFO and interim president and CEO for Bethel New Life; and comptroller for the Chicago Housing Authority; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence first joined Cook County in 1993 and served as CFO for the Forest Preserves of Cook County, he implemented controls over cash management for all golf courses located within Cook County. Lawrence also developed a plan for a computerized office automation network; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence would later rejoin Cook County in 2012, serving as comptroller, his efforts resulted in the reduction of the County's audit findings 10 to 1 in his first year because he eliminated financial reporting weaknesses; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence excelled at resolving financial complexities, the County received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for fiscal years 2013 through 2021, from the Government Finance Officers Association, a notable achievement given the County had last received the honor in fiscal year 2001; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence helped implement the Oracle financial (ERP) system, he also devised a system of ePayables which has continued to provide revenue enhancement; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence took the helm as interim CFO for seven months in 2022, and simultaneously executed the duties of comptroller, he ensured that the County maintained fiscal stability through two bond issuances totaling \$489 million. Lawrence also renewed both a \$130 million letter of credit and \$175 million line of credit; and assisted local tax jurisdictions in financial need through the development of a bridge loan program; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence served as Board President of the \$16 billion Pension Fund, he maintained operations while executive leadership transitioned and helped pass significant pension funding legislation; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence served as chair of the Deferred Compensation Committee, he led implementation of governance improvement, developed a new pricing model and reduced operating costs of the County's \$2 billion supplemental retirement plan; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence received many accolades during his illustrious career, he's always been deeply appreciated by Cook County's 20,000 plus employees who have always been paid on time while he was comptroller; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence is retiring from public service, he'll be embarking upon a new career as professor, fulfilling his calling to teach and mentor young adults; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence will be missed as he's been an indispensable financial force and mentor to many; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence should be immensely proud of his countless professional accomplishments, roles and accolades, he would say his most important title and achievement has and will always be that of father and husband; and

**WHEREAS**, Lawrence leaves an indelible impression amongst his peers for his leadership, invaluable mentorship, holiday karaoke sing-alongs and indisputable passion for golf; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners, hereby honor and recognize Lawrence L. Wilson for his work on behalf of the residents of Cook County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a suitable copy of this Resolution be rendered to Lawrence L. Wilson as a means of communicating our sincere appreciation.