



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 16-1509, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF NON-CITIZEN VETERANS REMOVED FROM THE UNITED STATES

WHEREAS, there are a significant number of non-citizen veterans of foreign wars, including World War II, Vietnam, Korea, Gulf Wars, Iraq and Afghanistan who have been removed from the United States; and

WHEREAS, these veterans currently live in terrible and abject conditions after having served in the armed services of the United States; and

WHEREAS, several of these veterans have asked for support in obtaining reentry into the United States to be with their families and U.S. citizen children; and

WHEREAS, non-citizens compose a significant portion of the armed forces, enlisting more than 8,000 persons annually; and

WHEREAS, according to the Department of Defense, more than 65,000 non-citizen immigrants were serving in the U.S. armed forces as of 2008- accounting for at least 5% of the total active-duty personnel; and

WHEREAS, the Immigration Reform Act of 1996 broadened the criteria for removable offenses to include shoplifting, misdemeanor drug offenses and other minor offenses, allowing the Department of Homeland Security to quietly deport veterans who have fallen on hard times; and

WHEREAS, according to Banished Veterans, a support group for deported veterans, there are currently 3,000 veterans in immigration detention centers or in removal proceedings at any given time; and

WHEREAS, veterans that have been deported do not have access to Veterans Affairs benefits or other benefits designed for veterans; and

WHEREAS, the nation owes these veterans adequate support and rehabilitation equal to that of veterans with full citizenship; and

WHEREAS, the non-citizen parents, spouses and children of veterans and service men and women who have been killed during active duty still face risk of deportation; and

WHEREAS, these veteran family members also need adequate rehabilitation and mental health resources in order to cope with extreme hardship and loss that is a result of war; and

WHEREAS, after having served time for their crimes in the criminal justice system, they are almost immediately afterwards dropped at the doorsteps of their country of birth - with no resources, no contacts and,

at times, no knowledge of the language, resulting in compounded punishment; and

WHEREAS, these valiant yet deported veterans are solely allowed reentry into the United States posthumously for their burial in a U.S. military cemetery.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners will bring to light the plight of these veterans and raise awareness to members of the United States Congress and to the President of the United States in a determined effort to gain equal treatment to these veterans, their families and communities in the United States.