



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 17-1163, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF FRANK LIVINGSTON ROSEN**

**WHEREAS**, Frank Livingston Rosen was born on July 13, 1925 in Pittsburgh, grew up in Cleveland, Ohio and Miami Beach, Florida and moved to the Southwest side of Chicago as a young man; and

**WHEREAS**, Frank was a lifelong labor leader and political activist and contributed significantly to the labor movement in Chicago; and

**WHEREAS**, Frank passed on November 28, 2016 and is survived by his wife Bernice Selden as well as his children from his first marriage, Rachel DeGolia, Rebecca Balanoff, and Carl Rosen, his six grandchildren, his two great-grandchildren; and

**WHEREAS**, Frank took part in many of the seminal moments in Chicago history, from studying nuclear physics under Enrico Fermi, to fighting to defend civil liberties in the McCarthy era, to the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements, to electing Harold Washington as mayor, to organizing against the unregulated power of utility companies, all while helping thousands of members of his union struggle on a daily basis for decent wages and benefits and dignity on the job; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1949, Frank met and married his wife of 47 years, Lois Anne (Schafer), two years later they left the university and moved to the Southwest Side of Chicago where they formed a working partnership, raising three children while immersing themselves in union and community organizing; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1951, Frank took a job as a machine operator at Goodman Manufacturing, a company that built heavy mining equipment worked his way up to maintenance electrician and served on the negotiating committee for 14 consecutive years and helped lead several strikes; and

**WHEREAS**, Frank was a rank-and-file member of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) for 15 years, joined the national staff of the UE in 1966 and spent the next 10 years assisting UE locals in Chicago and Minneapolis, as well as at the large Allen-Bradley plant in Milwaukee where he helped run the 1970 strike of thousands of workers to secure a decent pension plan, and in 1976 was elected president of UE District 11, a position he held until his retirement in 1990; and

**WHEREAS**, in the face of racial turmoil in Chicago in the 1960s and 1970s, Frank worked with Lois Anne and others to form the Southwest Community Congress (SCC) to build relationships across racial and neighborhood divides. It was their work with SCC that led to opportunities for Harold Washington to engage with residents of the Southwest Side, an area of the city that was generally hostile to his mayoral candidacy; and

**WHEREAS**, Frank also marshaled support in Chicago for the grape boycotts led by Cesar Chávez and the United Farm Workers in the 1960s and helped create a national organization, the All Unions Committee for a Shorter Work Week, in the 1970s; and

**WHEREAS**, Frank was an outspoken early opponent of the Vietnam War and went on to organize significant labor union opposition to the war and as a speaker at a small anti-war demonstration in the mid-1960s where he accurately predicted

that their numbers would grow and they would stop the war and continued as a leader in a number of peace organizations throughout his life; and

**WHEREAS**, in the 1970s, Frank was a founder of the Labor Coalition on Public Utilities (LCPU), created to take on the price-gouging and under-investment in infrastructure by the major utility companies with Lois Anne serving as LCPU's Executive Director and LCPU laying the groundwork for the creation of the Citizens Utility Board (CUB) which continues to fight for the interests of residential utility consumers to this day with Rosen being elected to represent his congressional district as one of the first directors of CUB; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout that time, Frank worked closely on many social justice issues with other leaders of the left wing of Chicago's labor movement, led by the likes of Charlie Hayes of the Packinghouse Workers, who later became a U.S. Congressman; and

**WHEREAS**, Frank continued his work well into his late 80s until his health made it impossible to continue, working with a number of organizations in retirement even after losing his wife and partner Lois Anne to cancer at too young an age in 1996; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2002, Frank was fortunate to find and marry another partner, Bernice Selden, who shared his political views and many other interests; and

**WHEREAS**, throughout his long life, Frank was an insightful and generous mentor to successive generations of young activists in the labor movement and other social justice organizations and many a new organizer would come to him for advice and support.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT**, the Cook County Board of Commissioners commemorates the life and legacy of Frank Livingston Rosen.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** that this text be spread upon the proceedings of this Honorable Body and that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Frank Livingston Rosen.