



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 24-3211, **Version:** 1

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### PROPOSED RESOLUTION

#### HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF REVEREND WALTER "SLIM" COLEMAN

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman lived a beautiful life filled with friends and family. Unfortunately, he lost his life on April 16, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman's activist and organizing work in Chicago dates back to the Civil Rights and antiwar movements of the 1960's; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman was raised in Lubbock, Texas before entering Harvard University on a scholarship. He left Harvard a month before graduation to begin his work in activism but returned to finish his education there almost 20 years later; and

**WHEREAS**, during the 1960s, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman traveled to Cleveland, Ohio to work at the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee under the leadership of James Forman. This organization consisted mainly of Black college students who practiced peaceful, direct-action protests that ultimately led to civil rights victories; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman and Kathy Archibald - two white Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee members - moved to Chicago in 1966 and joined the activist organization Students for a Democratic Society; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman and Kathy Archibald worked together to establish the People's Information Center in Lincoln Park. This center collaborated with the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords activist group, led by the well-known activist Jose "Cha Cha" Jimenez; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman collaborated with Fred Hampton to establish the Rainbow Coalition in Chicago. The Coalition was a combination of the Illinois Black Panther Party, the Young Lords, and the Young Patriots Organization. The Young Patriots Organization was a leftist organization primarily comprised of white migrants from Appalachia and was based in Uptown; and

**WHEREAS**, as a community organizer in the Uptown neighborhood in the 1970's, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman organized the International Survival Committee - an auxiliary to the Black Panther Party - along with future Chicago Alderwoman Helen Shiller; and

**WHEREAS**, the Committee later became known as the Heart of Uptown Coalition, a political and social service organization focused on needs such as access to affordable housing, medical care, legal aid; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman played a significant role in Harold Washington's successful campaign to become Chicago's first Black mayor in 1983, particularly in the crucial voter registration effort; and

**WHEREAS**, in the late 1980's and early 1990s, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman split his work between Uptown and West Town/Bucktown communities with a focus on serving the needs of immigrants; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman married activist the Rev. Emma Lozano and went on to raise his children Robert Rico, Anita Rico, Tanya Lozano, Joline Lozano, and Roberto C. Lopez and six grandchildren a family; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman earned a Master of Divinity from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. Later, he became the pastor of Adalberto United Methodist Church in the Humboldt Park neighborhood; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2006, the church gained notoriety for providing sanctuary for Elvira Arellano, an undocumented immigrant who herself became well-known as an immigration rights activist; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman and his wife Rev. Emma Lozano spent many years as the spiritual leaders for Adalberto and the sister church Lincoln United Methodist in Pilsen - with a significant focus on ministry for immigrants; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman also worked as an aide to former United States Representative Luis Gutierrez for ten years; and

**WHEREAS**, beginning in 2007, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman also served as the Director of the Familia Latina Unida Medical Reserve Corps; and

**WHEREAS**, Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman is an inspiration for Chicago and the country and the legacy he has left behind will transcend generations to come.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby hold in reverence in honor of the historic legacy of Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman, as we offer our deepest condolences to his friends, family, and community; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the family of Rev. Walter "Slim" Coleman as an honorable expression of appreciation for his life and work. .