



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 15-0708, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

URGING THE GOVERNOR AND STATE LEGISLATURE TO SUPPORT ADDITIONAL MENTAL HEALTH FUNDING IN ILLINOIS PURSUANT TO COOK COUNTY BALLOT REFERENDUM

WHEREAS, The Cook County Board of Commissioners placed a referendum question before Cook County voters regarding mental health funding in Illinois; and

WHEREAS, According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Illinois ranked fourth in the nation in terms of cutting mental health programs, with \$187 million in cuts between 2009 and 2012; and

WHEREAS, Six of Chicago's twelve mental health care facilities have been closed by the City of Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart estimates 25-30% of the Cook County Jail population is suffering from mental illness and Cook County Jail is viewed as the largest mental health facility in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Violent crime in all of our communities could lead to dissociative identity disorder and residents suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder; and

WHEREAS, A study conducted by the University of Chicago suggests that the majority of youth involved with the criminal justice system experience at least one psychiatric disorder; and

WHEREAS, Psychologists report that chronic high unemployment and poverty could lead to higher stress, lower self-esteem, fear about the future, social isolation, stigma, increased risk of problematic substance abuse, increased risk of mental illness and worsening symptoms of a mental illness; and

WHEREAS, One in five Illinois residents experiences a diagnosable mental disorder every year; and

WHEREAS, Mental health is critical to the well-being and vitality of our families, businesses, and communities; and

WHEREAS, Mental illness affects people regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or economic status; and

WHEREAS, the President and Members of the Board of Commissioners of Cook County recognize the significance of mental illness in Cook County and believe that more needs to be done to reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and additional resources to heighten awareness of and treatment for mental illness should be provided; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners placed the following question before the electorate via a referendum on the November 4, 2014 countywide ballot urging the General Assembly of the State of Illinois to appropriate additional funds to provide necessary mental health services for the people of the State of Illinois, as follows:

“Shall the General Assembly of the State of Illinois appropriate additional funds to provide necessary mental health services for the people of the State of Illinois?”

and

WHEREAS, the voters of Cook County overwhelmingly approved the ballot referendum regarding additional funding for mental health programs by more than 1 million votes; and

WHEREAS, we are a government of the people, by the people and for the people and we should be guided by the voters' wishes.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Cook County Board of Commissioners that we urge The Governor-Elect, and The State Legislature to appropriate additional funds for mental health programs in Illinois.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Clerk provide a copy of this Resolution to the Governor-Elect and State Legislative Leaders.