



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 15-0771, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF JUDY BAAR TOPINKA

WHEREAS, God, in His infinite wisdom, has called an iconic political leader, renowned for her brilliant intellect, for the vibrancy and warmth of her person, for her deeply principled integrity, for her pioneering work in being fiscally responsible and for her trailblazing as a woman in politics and government, Judy Baar Topinka, from our midst; and

WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka was born in west suburban Riverside in 1944, to Lillian Mary (Shuss) and William D. Baar, the children of Slovak and Czech immigrants; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Topinka graduated from Ferry Hall School, now known as Lake Forest Academy in 1962. Ms. Topinka then attended Northwestern University and received a Bachelor of Science degree from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism where she was also a member of Alpha Gamma Delta sorority; and

WHEREAS, in 1965 Ms. Topinka married Joe Topinka and together had a son, Joseph before divorcing Mr. Topinka in 1981; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from Northwestern, Ms. Topinka became a reporter for several Chicago suburban newspapers, eventually becoming an editor and on the side, she established her own public relations business, through which she began a career in consulting for various political candidates; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, Ms. Topinka first pursued her own career in politics by running for the Illinois General Assembly where she won a seat in the Illinois House of Representatives, where she served from 1981 to 1985. She then went on to serve in the Illinois Senate from 1985 to 1995; and

WHEREAS, she ran for Illinois State Treasurer in 1995 and was elected for the first of three terms, which made her the first woman to become State Treasurer and the first Republican to hold the post in 32 years as well as being a recognized and respected taxpayer watchdog and earned a reputation for speaking up against mismanagement of public funds. She also was a previous chair of the Illinois Republican Party; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, Topinka was the first woman to win the Republican nomination for Governor in Illinois, however, she was defeated by Governor Rod Blagojevich; and

WHEREAS, in 2010 Ms. Topinka successfully ran for the office of the Illinois Comptroller where she was reelected for a second four-year term in November 2014; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Topinka displayed an impulsive, candid style. During one of her campaigns, her fliers called it "common sense, straight talk, hard work". A fiscal conservative, she was also an early advocate of abortion and gay rights; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Topinka was well known for her love of animals, particularly her dogs. She spoke four languages - English, Czech, Spanish and Polish; and

WHEREAS, Judy Baar Topinka was active in politics for 34 years and she is highly regarded as one the first women in Illinois politics to carve out a path for women to come, many of whom she mentored; and

WHEREAS, in losing Judy Baar Topinka we have lost a woman who never gave up the fight.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Judy Baar Topinka's memory shall be cherished in all of the hearts of the people whom she touched and loved.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the residents of Cook County, does hereby express its deepest condolences and most heartfelt sympathy to the family as well as the many friends, colleagues and loved ones of Judy Baar Topinka, and may a suitable copy of this resolution be tendered to her family herewith.