



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 15-3457, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **HONORING THE 50<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE KENWOOD-OAKLAND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION**

**WHEREAS**, the Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization, commonly known as KOCO, was founded by community and religious leaders in 1965 and celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> year of existence this year; and

**WHEREAS**, KOCO was incorporated 2 years later in 1967 and had as its first executive director, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.; and

**WHEREAS**, KOCO members organized to get the Martin Luther King, Jr. High School built in 1971 to replace the overcrowded Forrestville High School because Black students were unable to enroll in Kenwood High School at the time; and

**WHEREAS**, KOCO members organized to get the Kenwood-Oakland Medical (KOMED) health clinic opened in 1975, which later merged with the Holman Health Clinic in 1997, to provide quality health care to low-income and working families in the north Kenwood-Oakland community; and

**WHEREAS**, KOCO members organized to erect the Woodlake Village Townhomes in 1988 to provide affordable housing for more than 70 families on a parcel of land that had become an unsanctioned waste dump in the middle of the community; and

**WHEREAS**, the first Black Mayor of Chicago, Harold Washington, broke ground at the site of what would become the Woodlake Village Townhomes in 1987 the morning of the day he died in office; and

**WHEREAS**, in the mid 1980's, KOCO members organized to create another 300 units of affordable housing in the north Kenwood-Oakland community to provide safe, decent, quality housing for families in need; and

**WHEREAS**, KOCO members led the call for balanced community development in north Kenwood-Oakland leading to the creation of a shopping center and the designation of north Kenwood-Oakland as a community conservation area; and

**WHEREAS**, Jhatayn "Jay" Travis served as KOCO's fourth executive director from 2000-2012, and ushered in a renaissance of its community organizing activities - challenging slum lords and school closing advocates, and refocusing its attention on grassroots leadership development; and

**WHEREAS**, KOCO members organized to get a signed community benefits agreement to protect community residents from being displaced if Chicago won its bid for the 2016 Summer Olympic Games; and

**WHEREAS**, KOCO members have traveled to South America and South Africa to address issues of racism and education, receiving international recognition for its service to the ideals of social justice; and

**WHEREAS**, KOCO has provided a litany of unnamed benefits and protection to some of the most vulnerable populations in the city of Chicago, Cook County, the state of Illinois and beyond; and

**WHEREAS**, KOCO is currently led by its fifth executive director, J. Brian Malone, and has maintained its use of

community organizing as its primary methodology to create change for low-income and working families in the north Kenwood-Oakland community.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby recognize and honor the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization and their distinguished record of service to low-income and working families throughout Cook County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this text be spread upon the proceedings of this Honorable Body and that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization in honor of this auspicious occasion.