



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE COOK COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY TO APPEAR BEFORE A HEARING OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS THE INVESTIGATION AND INDICTMENT IN THE LAQUAN MCDONALD CASE

WHEREAS, the aftermath of officer-involved deaths of civilians such as those of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Freddy Gray in Baltimore, Eric Garner in New York, Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Walter Scott in North Charleston and the shooting death of Laquan McDonald here in Chicago, has brought to the national consciousness not only the question of what constitutes justifiable force by police officers but as importantly, the manner in which such incidents are investigated, and when warranted, prosecuted; and

WHEREAS, it is vital that there exists public confidence in all branches of the criminal justice system, including the prosecutorial arm, and that such trust fundamentally relies upon a showing of transparency and accountability by those criminal justice stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, it is essential that the Office of the Cook County State's Attorney recognizes and acknowledges the legitimate societal expectations of such stakeholders and the justifiable need for public trust in order to have the public as a willing participant in the justice system; and

WHEREAS, since shortly after the shooting of Laquan McDonald, the State's Attorney was in possession of multiple video images associated with the incident yet no charges were brought until 400 days after the shooting, thereby raising myriad questions among the public concerning the overall investigation, what steps were or were not undertaken by the State's Attorney, the rationale for those decisions and the reasoning underlying the coincidental timing of the indictment relative to the release of the videos; and

WHEREAS, this is just one incident among numerous other matters that raises significant questions about the operations of her office; and

WHEREAS, leaving such questions unanswered serves only to undermine community trust, thereby hampering future efforts by criminal justice stakeholders to administer justice in other incidents and to have the public as willing and trusting partners in working to prosecute other individuals responsible for the plague of violence that exists in the City of Chicago and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the Cook County Board of Commissioners has a legitimate, shared and vested interest in ensuring that its agencies and offices operate honestly and efficiently in order to assure the confidence of Cook County residents in the fundamental workings of the criminal justice process; and

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of this government and the County of Cook that its residents are receiving, and entitled to, the best possible criminal justice system and that such entitlement is premised upon honest, accountable and transparent services by those responsible for such system.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby request that a hearing of the Criminal Justice Committee be convened as soon as is practical to discuss the decisions and processes used to investigate and bring charges in the Laquan McDonald case; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in order to properly and fully have such discussions, the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby request that the Cook County State's Attorney appear before the Criminal Justice Committee to present any statement she may choose to offer and to answer questions from the committee members.