



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 16-2332, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **HONORING PEPE VARGAS - FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE CHICAGO LATINO FILM FESTIVAL & THE INTERNATIONAL LATINO CULTURAL CENTER OF CHICAGO**

**WHEREAS**, Pepe Vargas grew up in a small town in Colombia and in 1976, received his degree in Law & Social Sciences from the National University of Buenos Aires in Argentina; and

**WHEREAS** Pepe Vargas arrived in Chicago in 1980 with only a few dollars in his pocket and without speaking much English earned a degree in Broadcast Journalism & Television/Film production from Columbia College Chicago in 1985; and

**WHEREAS**, Pepe Vargas founded the Chicago Latino Film Festival in 1985 with a budget of \$10,000, an audience of 500 and 14 films projected on a wall; and

**WHEREAS**, since 1986, the Chicago Latino Film Festival has evolved into the largest Latino film festival in the U.S. and is now Chicago's biggest International Latino cultural event; and

**WHEREAS**, after 32 years the Chicago Latino Film Festival has grown its audience to more than 70,000 people who enjoy the multinational, cross-cultural exchanges offered every year; and

**WHEREAS**, building on the success of the Film Festival, Pepe Vargas created the International Latino Cultural Center of Chicago to showcase the boundless multinational talent of Latino artists and the Center prides itself for its outstanding multidisciplinary and international cultural programming that includes a wide variety of art forms from Latin America, Spain, Portugal and the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, Pepe Vargas has served as a juror in various film festivals in Latin America and Spain, and as a media panelist for several institutions including the Illinois Arts Council and the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, amongst others and served as a trustee of the Illinois Humanities Council; and

**WHEREAS**, Pepe Vargas has received many recognitions and awards, including Chicago Tribune's Chicagoan of the Year 2003 and an Honorary Doctoral Degree from Lake Forest College and was one of the two winners of the Chicago Community Trust 2006/7 Fellowship for Community Leaders, which allowed him to travel extensively through Latin America, Spain, France, and the United States visiting other cultural institutions and in 2011, the Chicago Tribune named Pepe Vargas as a Remarkable Person, and in December of 2015 Crain's Chicago featured him in their "Take Away" column; and

**WHEREAS**, Pepe Vargas continues to pursue his dream of building a state-of-the-art, cultural complex in Chicago that allows residents to share the visual and performing arts, language, music, comedy, poetry, films, the culinary arts and many other cultural expressions that reflect the lives of more than 600 million Latinos worldwide.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby recognize and honor Pepe Vargas for his work and dedication to fostering the understanding of Latino culture through the universal language of the arts by showing, through our cultural expressions, that Latinos are defined by more than 20 different nationalities and come from all social and racial backgrounds; 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 Pepe Vargas.