



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 16-2632, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **BOYCOTTING MISSISSIPPI AND MISSISSIPPI-BASED BUSINESSES**

**WHEREAS**, the State of Mississippi adopted a controversial new law, HB1523, dubbed the Protecting Freedom of Conscience from Government Discrimination, which would allow government employees to refuse to issue marriage licenses or perform marriage ceremonies; and

**WHEREAS**, HB1523 allows businesses and faith-based groups to deny housing, jobs and adoption and foster care services to people based on their sexual orientation or gender identity; and

**WHEREAS**, there will be no disciplinary recourse for businesses or government employees that decline to participate in the provision of treatment, counseling, or surgery related to gender identity, psychological, counseling or fertility services; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mississippi anti-LGBT Law, which will not take any disciplinary or enforcement action against a person who denies the aforementioned services, will have a negative effect and undermine the level of trust and cooperation between local police and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the advocacy group, Freedom for All Americans, referred to Mississippi HB1523 as, “the Nation’s worst piece of anti-LGBT legislation”, the law goes even further than Indiana’s and North Carolina’s anti-LGBT laws, Gov. Bryant’s bill goes even farther in denying critical protections of and enabling discrimination against LGBT individuals; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Mississippi has charted an ominous legal course that puts extremist politics before public safety and respect for human dignity, and betrays our most deeply-held American values; and

**WHEREAS**, HB1523 seriously undermines our basic American principles of fairness, justice and equality and will not protect anyone’s religious rights; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Mississippi continues to be one of three states to combine Robert E. Lee and Dr. Martin Luther King as a state holiday on the same day; one a Confederate General that led the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia in the Civil War, a fight where the South fought to continue the enslaved labor of blacks and economic system that slavery made possible; and

**WHEREAS**, on the polar opposite, Dr. Martin Luther King dedicated his life to win equal rights and opportunities for African Americans, the State of Mississippi has again chosen to isolate itself from the rest of the United States of America; and

**WHEREAS**, many states, such as Vermont, Washington, and New York have passed legislation to ban official state-funded travel or sponsored travel to Mississippi and the District of Columbia is considering a similar measure; and

**WHEREAS**, the most appropriate response, by the taxpayers of Cook County to the State of Mississippi, is to assure that the State of Mississippi’s isolation is tangible rather than symbolic; and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County, the 2nd largest county in the nation with a budget of over 3 billion dollars and a diverse population of more than five million, should be a leader in protecting the rights of people.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Cook County Board of Commissioners that this Board of Commissioners hereby finds the Mississippi anti-LGBT Law to be offensive to the values of the taxpayers of Cook County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, by the Cook County Board of Commissioners that this Board of Commissioners hereby boycotts the State of Mississippi and Mississippi-based businesses as long as Mississippi HB1523 stands in its current form; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that unless and until Mississippi HB1523 is repealed or invalidated, the Cook County Board of Commissioners and the Cook County Departments shall refrain from, to the extent practicable, and in instances where there is no significant additional cost to the County nor conflict with law, entering into any new, renewed, or amended contracts to purchase goods or services from any company that is headquartered in Mississippi; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, by the Cook County Board of Commissioners that County government will not participate in any conventions or other business, which requires County resources to be spent in the State of Mississippi; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, by the Cook County Board of Commissioners that this Board of Commissioners hereby urges the Illinois General Assembly and the Governor of the State of Illinois to adopt similar resolutions calling for the boycott of the State of Mississippi and Mississippi-based businesses until the Mississippi anti-LGBT Law, HB1523 is repealed or invalidated; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners hereby directs the Secretary of the Board to send a copy of this Resolution to Mississippi Governor, Phil Bryant.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage.