



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 17-5862, **Version:** 1

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **CONGRATULATING RAMI NASHASHIBI ON RECEIVING THE MACARTHUR FOUNDATION GENIUS AWARD**

**WHEREAS**, the MacArthur Foundation Genius Award is a prestigious award given out each year in “recognition of exceptional creativity; promise for important future advances based on the recipient’s previous track record; and the potential of the award to facilitate subsequent creative work”; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi, founder and Executive Director of the Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), was announced to be one of the 2017 recipient fellows; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi received a B.A. (1995) from DePaul University and a Ph.D. (2010) from the University of Chicago and has taught at a number of colleges and universities across the Chicagoland area, and served as a member of President Obama’s Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships in 2016; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi’s passion for social justice was ignited when he came to Chicago in 1990 and was exposed to the inequalities underrepresented communities face on the south side of Chicago; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi founded IMAN in 1997, in the Chicago Lawn neighborhood to confront the challenges of poverty and disinvestment in urban communities and build bridges across racial, religious, and socioeconomic divides; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi’s leadership in IMAN has served to counter xenophobic misperceptions of immigrants with a powerful example of Muslim-led community activism and to demonstrating how Islamic spiritual ideals enrich American culture; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi’s work in a diverse community of Latino, African-American, working class white and immigrant families of different religious backgrounds is an example of what happens when people see their commonalities rather than differences, bridging the gap between communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi’s well-deserved award comes right on time as he is celebrating 20 years of grass-roots organizing; and

**WHEREAS**, through IMAN, Rami Nashashibi has worked to help citizens returning from prison regain their footing by giving them income-based housing, job training, salaried positions and the tools to help them find their life’s purpose; and

**WHEREAS**, IMAN, which operates with a \$3.9 million annual budget, established a program that renovates vacant properties and sells them to lower-income, working residents who go through a homeownership training program; and

**WHEREAS**, IMAN has established a small community clinic that provides primary health care and behavioral health services to a largely uninsured and underinsured population in and around Marquette Park; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi launched the Muslim Run Corner Store Campaign, a program that aims to make fresh, healthy foods more readily available in underserved neighborhoods, develop alternative business models for food and

liquor stores, and heal the racial tensions between store owners (who are often Arab immigrants) and patrons (who are predominantly black); and

**WHEREAS**, to further promote cross-cultural dialogue and celebrate wide-ranging forms of artistic expression, including hip-hop, Sufi Qawwali singing, spoken-word, and soul, IMAN produces a vibrant arts and social justice festival, Takin' It to the Streets, that attracts an audience of thousands to the heart of Marquette Park; and

**WHEREAS**, more recently, IMAN began hosting weekly Grassroots Power Hour sessions, which offer local residents a space to discuss their needs in relation to shifting immigration and criminal justice policies with legal experts, behavioral health staff, community organizers, and one another; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi's practical approach to addressing social justice issues at the local level in Chicago neighborhoods has informed and inspired Muslim American civic engagement efforts in cities from Los Angeles to Atlanta, where a new chapter of IMAN recently opened; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi has lectured across the United States, Europe, and Asia on a range of topics related to American Muslim identity, community activism and social justice issues and is a recipient of several prestigious community service and organizing honors; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi and his work with IMAN have been featured in many national and international media outlets and in 2009, Chicago Public Radio selected him as one of the "Top Ten Chicago Global Visionaries"; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2014, the Center for American Progress profiled Rami Nashashibi as one of the "14 Faith Leaders to Watch in 2014" and he was named one of the "500 Most Influential Muslims in the World" by The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Center in concert with Georgetown's Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding; and

**WHEREAS**, Rami Nashashibi's selection is a testament to his extraordinary vision and leadership, built upon the long legacy of transformative Muslim-led work in urban neighborhoods across America.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby congratulate Rami Nashashibi on receiving the MacArthur Foundation Genius Award; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a suitable copy of this resolution be tendered to Rami Nashashibi for his accomplishments.