



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 18-6465, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

CELEBRATING THE CAREER OF KEITH KELLEHER

WHEREAS, Keith Kelleher's early work in the Jesuit Volunteer Corps in Detroit in the early 1980s led him to make a life-long commitment to organizing for social and economic justice; and

WHEREAS, in his 39 years of work as a labor and community organizer, Keith Kelleher has pioneered the organization of fast food, home care, child care and other low-wage workers-growing Legacy Local 880 from just seven members in 1983 to over 70,000 members by 2008, and growing SEIU HCIIMK from 83,000 members in 2008 to over 92,000 members by 2014; and winning living wages and first-ever healthcare for tens of thousands of Illinois workers; and

WHEREAS, Keith Kelleher was the Field Director of the national SEIU's "Homecare Task Force" from 1996-1998, traveling, researching, and house visiting homecare workers in over ten states, beginning the work which led to the organizing of hundreds of thousands of Homecare workers across the country; and

WHEREAS, Keith Kelleher had been President of the Service Employees International Union Healthcare Illinois/Indiana/Missouri/Kansas since its creation in April 2008, until April 2017, and had been field organizer, Lead Organizer, and Head Organizer of Legacy Local 880 since 1983, and Head Organizer of United Labor Unions Local 222 in Detroit, MI prior to that since 1980; and

WHEREAS, today, more than 600,000 home care and child care workers in more than fifteen states across the country are united in SEIU, fighting for a better standard of living for themselves and their families, joining with nursing home and hospital workers to become a national movement for quality care and quality jobs; and

WHEREAS, Keith Kelleher was a founder and leader in the national SEIU Homecare Council, composed of leaders of over 15 local unions; and

WHEREAS, Keith Kelleher was a Board member and then Vice-President of the SEIU Illinois State Council, which grew from 70,000 to over 120,000 members during his years of service; and

WHEREAS, as an organizer, Keith Kelleher has been privileged to train hundreds of rank and file leaders and organizers over his career; and

WHEREAS, Keith Kelleher helped found the Helen Miller Member Education and Training Center (METC) which has trained thousands of Homecare and Child Care workers, as well as helping to found the SEIU HCIIMK Homecare and Child Care Health Trust Fund, which brought first-time health care to over 15,000 Homecare and Child Care workers; and

WHEREAS, Keith Kelleher's conviction, integrity and foresight helped initiate several grassroots organizing initiatives like the Grassroots Collaborative, "Fight for \$15" and "United Working Families"; and

WHEREAS, Keith Kelleher was a founder and leader of the "Chicago Jobs and Living Wage Campaign" and the "Big Box Living Wage Campaign" from the 1990's to the 2000's, which led to the increases in the Chicago and Illinois minimum wage to the benefit of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Chicago and Illinois workers; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his historic accomplishments in organizing and the labor movement, Keith Kelleher was elected as an SEIU International Executive Board Vice-President in June 2008 until 2017; and

WHEREAS, after many years of hard work and dedication, Keith Kelleher retired from the Service Employees International Union Healthcare Illinois/Indiana/Missouri/Kansas on September 14, 2018; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the residents of Cook County, hereby congratulate Keith Kelleher for all that he has contributed to the labor workforce; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this Resolution be tendered to Keith Kelleher as a means of communicating our appreciation for his service and we wish him all the best on his retirement and future endeavors.