



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING THE REVEREND JESSE JACKSON SR. ON BEING AWARDED LA LÉGION D'HONNEUR, FRANCE'S HIGHEST HONOR

WHEREAS, Jesse Louis Jackson Sr. was born on October 8, 1941, in Greenville, South Carolina; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Jackson began his theological studies at Chicago Theological Seminary, but deferred his studies when he began working full-time in the Civil Rights Movement with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Later, he was ordained on June 30, 1968, by Reverend Clay Evans and earned a Master of Divinity degree from Chicago Theological Seminary in 2000; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Jackson, one of America's foremost civil rights, religious and political figures, is the Founder and President of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition and has been a champion of human and civil rights and nonviolent social change for decades, and a leading advocate for a variety of public policy issues, including universal health care, equal administration of justice in all communities, voting rights, sufficient funding for enforcement of civil rights laws, and for increased attention to business investment in under-served domestic communities among many other just causes; and

WHEREAS, over the past forty years, he has played a pivotal role in virtually every movement for empowerment, peace, civil rights, gender equality, and economic and social justice; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Jackson has received more than 40 honorary doctorate degrees and frequently lectures at major colleges and universities including Howard, Yale, Princeton, Morehouse, Harvard, Columbia, Stanford and Hampton; and

WHEREAS, in 2000, President Bill Clinton awarded Reverend Jackson the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our nation's highest civilian honor, and just recently France bestowed upon Reverend Jackson it's highest honor; and

WHEREAS, on Monday July 19th, 2021, French President Emmanuel Macron made Jesse Jackson a Commander of the Legion of Honor (La Légion d'Honneur), the highest French order of merit, both military and civil, established in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte, for helping "change the destiny of the United States" and with it, the world"; and

WHEREAS, "From your earliest years, you were hungry for knowledge and justice, and you are a special friend of France, a brother for us," Macron said in a solemn address at the Élysée Presidential Palace, adding, "He's a visionary with talent for uniting and leading people, whose moral and physical courage has helped him to overcome adversity and change the destiny of the United States, our oldest ally, and to change our world for the better"; and

WHEREAS, as a highly respected and trusted world leader, Reverend Jackson has acted many times as an international diplomat in sensitive situations; and

WHEREAS, President Macron recounted Jackson's 1990 role in freeing French hostages during the first Gulf War. Citizens from several countries trying to stop the invasion of Kuwait were taken hostage by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. President Macron said Jackson negotiated the release of French citizens and thanks to his efforts, they were safely

returned to their families; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, during his five-day visit to the French Caribbean archipelago of Guadeloupe, Reverend Jesse Jackson toured the "MEMORIAL ACTe," the world's largest museum dedicated to the Memory and History of Slavery from the early seventeenth century to present day and part of UNESCO's Slave Route Project, a global initiative to promote the rapprochement of peoples through the shared legacy of this tragedy; and

WHEREAS, at the time Reverend Jackson remarked to the crowd, "This is the most phenomenal museum of its kind in the whole world. I have been to museums in numerous cities across the world, we are now building a significant one in Washington DC, but this is the most complete museum of ours in the world and this is not the last one. It is the signal we need more museums to tell us about our story", adding, "I am a member of your family, I am not a foreigner, I am home...it's good to be home"; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Jackson's rejection of all forms of racism and exclusion, and emphasizing citizenship and the hope of progress, has inspired several generations of activists and public leaders throughout the world, and the values promoted by Reverend Jackson are universal and reflect those of the French Republic; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of this prestigious honor, one of many over his remarkable career, this Honorable Body wishes to honor the Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr.;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and Members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners does hereby congratulate Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr. on being named a Commander of the Legion of Honor (La Légion d'Honneur); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and a suitable copy be presented to Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr. and family as a symbol of our respect and esteem.