



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

File #: 22-6504, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED RESOLUTION

HONORING JUSTICE MARY JANE THEIS ON HER APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT

WHEREAS, Justice Mary Jane Theis was formally sworn in as Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court on November 14, 2022. Justice Theis was selected to serve as Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court at the Court's September 2022 Term. She will serve a three-year term commencing, October 26, 2022, succeeding Anne M. Burke, whose tenure as Chief Justice ended on October 25, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Justice Theis will be the fourth woman to serve as Chief Justice following the late Justice Mary Ann McMorrow, Justice Rita B. Garman, and Justice Burke; and

WHEREAS, Justice Theis was born Mary Jane Wendt in Chicago, Illinois to Eleanore and Judge Kenneth Wendt, a member of the Illinois General Assembly and longtime judge in Cook County. She received her bachelor's degree from Loyola University Chicago in 1971 and her J.D degree from the University of San Francisco School of Law in 1974; and

WHEREAS, following an internship at the Marin County Public Defender's Office in California and her graduation from law school, Justice Theis returned to Chicago as an Assistant Public Defender in Cook County where she worked from 1974 to 1983. She is the first former Public Defender to serve as Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS, Justice Theis has a long history on the bench. She became an associate judge in 1983, In 1988 she was elected as a circuit judge and was assigned to both the Criminal and Chancery Divisions. In 1993, Justice Theis was assigned to the First District Appellate Court by the Supreme Court and subsequently elected to that position in 1994. In 2010, she was appointed by the Illinois Supreme Court to fill a vacancy created by the retirement of Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald, taking office October 26, 2010; and

WHEREAS, Justice Theis won election to a full term in 2012. In the general election, the Chicago Tribune endorsed her for election to a full term, citing her "universally accepted expertise on judicial ethics, family law, sentencing, fairness;" and

WHEREAS, Justice Theis has also served as Chair for the Illinois Judicial Conference's Committees on Education and Judicial Conduct, as well as on the Illinois Supreme Court's Rules Committee. She previously served as the Supreme Court liaison to the Illinois Judicial College; and

WHEREAS, Justice Theis has also served as President of the Illinois Judges Association, and as President and founding member of the Illinois Judges Foundation. She was President of the Appellate Lawyers Association and served on the Board of Governors of the Illinois State Bar Association and the Board of Managers of the Chicago Bar Association and is a member of the Women's Bar Association of Illinois; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her work for the court, Justice Theis has taught courses at Loyola University School of Law, Northwestern University School of Law, and the John Marshall Law School. She has also been a speaker at Illinois and Chicago bar association conferences and seminars; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of her years of service, Justice Theis has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the

Illinois Judges Association, the Mary Heftel Hooten Award from the Women's Bar Association of Illinois, and the Access to Justice Award from the Illinois State Bar Association. Chief Justice Theis' other honors include the American Constitution Society's Legal Legend Award, the CBA's Vanguard Award for recognizing persons who have made the law and legal profession more accessible to and reflective of the community at large, the IJA's Celebrating the Achievement of a Judicial Icon, the CBA's John Paul Stevens Award, the Juvenile Justice Initiative's Champion of Children's Rights Award, the WBAI's Esther Rothstein Award for her vision, contributions and assistance to women in the legal profession, and the Illinois Bar Foundation's Distinguished Service to Law and Society Award; and

WHEREAS, her long history on the bench and her commitment to justice demonstrate that Chief Justice Theis is the right person to lead the Illinois Supreme Court.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Cook County, on behalf of the 5.2 million residents of Cook County, honors Chief Justice Mary Jane Theis on the occasion of her appointment as Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court and for her years of service to the residents of Illinois; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body and that an official copy of the same be tendered to Chief Justice Mary Jane Theis.