



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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**File #: 23-5368, Version: 1**

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### **PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

#### **REQUESTING A HEARING IN THE COOK COUNTY HUMAN RELATIONS COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS THE ONGOING VIOLENCE AND SYSTEMIC BARRIERS AGAINST COOK COUNTY TRANSGENDER RESIDENTS**

**WHEREAS**, transgender residents in Cook County are vital members of our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, transgender residents and trans-led organizations in Cook County contribute in numerous ways to enrich the quality of life in Cook County; and

**WHEREAS**, transgender people in our lives should be embraced and celebrated for the wonderful people they are and talents they bring to our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, these residents face systemic barriers and epidemic levels of violence leading to lack of access, for some, of basic needs and in the most extreme cases, leading to death; and

**WHEREAS**, since 2020, more trans people have been killed in Chicago than any other U.S. city, with a majority of the killings of targeting transgender women, particularly those of color; and

**WHEREAS**, in March 2022 alone, two Black, trans women, Tatiana LaBelle and Elise Malary, were found dead within 24 hours of each other days after being reported missing with LaBelle found beaten to death and put in a garbage bin in East Chatham and Elise Malary pulled out of Lake Michigan; and

**WHEREAS**, in March 2022, Kathryn Newhouse, a 19-year-old transgender woman formerly a resident of Illinois, was shot and killed by her father; and

**WHEREAS**, on January 23, 2023, Unique Banks, a 21-year-old Latina trans woman, and her mother, Alexandra Olmo, were killed in during a home invasion in Chicago that seriously wounded three other people - Olmo's boyfriend and two other trans women; and

**WHEREAS**, on February 26, 2023, the body of Black transgender woman Cashay Henderson, who had recently returned to Chicago, was found in a burning apartment building in Milwaukee-she had been fatally shot before the fire was set; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, 2022 saw at least 40 transgender people fatally shot or killed by other violent means; and

**WHEREAS**, the Human Rights Campaign Foundation reports at least 19 transgender and gender non-conforming people whose lives have been tragically and inhumanely taken through violent means, including through gun and interpersonal violence so far in 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, according to an Everytown for Gun Safety report, the number of homicides of transgender people nearly doubled between 2017 and 2021, driven primarily by killings with firearms; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the report, 73% of tracked homicides between 2017 and 2021 were of Black trans women though they make up only an estimated 13% of the transgender population; and

**WHEREAS**, the American Medical Association has publicly described the level of violence against the transgender community as epidemic; and

**WHEREAS**, most medical experts, law enforcement officials, and community members have stated that data should assume to be incomplete given the misgendering of transgender people; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Center for Transgender Equality cites that one in five transgender people in the United States has been discriminated when seeking a home, that more than one in ten have been evicted from their homes, because of their gender identity, and that one in five transgender individuals have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Center for Transgender Equality also cites that, due the impact of family rejection, discrimination, and violence, a large number of transgender and other LGBTQ-identified youth are homeless in the United States - making up an estimated 20-40% of the more than 1.6 million homeless youth; and

**WHEREAS**, nearly one in six transgender Americans-and one in two black transgender people-has been to prison, with many of those individuals facing discrimination by administrators and threats of sexual assault; and

**WHEREAS**, countless other barriers exist in the daily lives of transgender individuals including with Cook County government; and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County stands with our transgender residents and realize there is still more work to do to provide gender-affirming services to transgender residents; and

**WHEREAS**, this body convened in April of 2022 for a hearing on the protocols and plans of the various Cook County offices to battle this ongoing issue; and

**WHEREAS**, in light of the continuation of these needless tragedies it is paramount that Cook County continues to update and better adjust our plans to help prevent and mitigate these harms;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the Cook County Board of Commissioners request a convening of the Cook County Human Relations Committee to conduct a hearing regarding past, current, and future protocols and/or plans in place which aim at serving the transgender community; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the following Cook County offices appear at the hearing to report to the Board regarding this topic:

- Cook County Health
- Cook County Medical Examiners' Office
- Cook County Sheriff's Office
- Cook County Department of Human Resources
- Cook County State's Attorney's Office
- Cook County Justice Advisory Council
- Cook County Department of Human Rights and Ethics

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the reports, updates, and strategies will detail the separately elected officials', or County departments', offices', and/or bureaus' individual and collaborative efforts to address this important and serious issue.