



City of Chicago



R2014-208

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	4/2/2014
Sponsor(s):	Burke (14) Solis (25)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Call on Illinois General Assembly to adopt Senate Bill 977 to allow citizens whose predominate language is not English to serve on juries
Committee(s) Assignment:	Committee on Human Relations

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago is proud to be one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world, where one-out-of-five of the city's residents was born outside of the United States; and

WHEREAS, with residents from over 140 countries and more than 100 languages spoken in our city, Chicago is a city of immigrants; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago metropolitan area is home to large numbers of immigrants from Mexico, Poland, India, the Philippines, China, Korea, Germany, Guatemala, Ukraine, and Italy; and

WHEREAS, language barriers can pose difficulties with everyday communications for many as more than as there are 350,000 foreign-born Chicago residents who describe themselves as speaking English "less than very well," which represents 62% of Chicago's immigrant population; and

WHEREAS, on March 17, 2014 Illinois State Senator Iris Martinez introduced Senate Bill 977 which, if passed into law, would allow all citizens whose predominant language is not English to fulfill their civic duty by serving on juries for both civil and criminal cases; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 977 proposes to amend the Jury Act (705 ILCS 305/2), the Jury Secrecy Act (705 ILCS 315.1), and the Illinois Code of Civil Procedure to allow jurors to utilize an interpreter or translator throughout trial and jury deliberations; and

WHEREAS, on March 25, 2014, the Senate Judiciary Committee heard testimony on the bill and voted the bill out of committee for consideration by the full Senate; and

WHEREAS, if adopted, Illinois would become the first state in the country to permit jurors to utilize an interpreter or translator, other than a sign language interpreter, for jury service; and

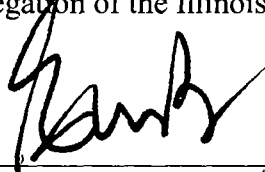
WHEREAS, the Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees a criminal defendant the right to trial by "an impartial jury"; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court has opined, "when any large and identifiable segment of the community is excluded from jury service, the effect is to remove from the jury room qualities of human nature and varieties of human experience, the range of which is unknown and perhaps unknowable." *Peters v. Kiff*, 407 U.S. 493, 503 (1972); and

WHEREAS, the corporate authorities of the City of Chicago support jury diversity and efforts to allow all citizens to fulfill their civic duties; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this 30th day of April, 2014 do hereby urge the Illinois General Assembly to adopt Senate Bill 977 to allow citizens whose predominate language is not English to fulfill their civic duty by serving on juries for both civil and criminal cases; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Illinois House Speaker Madigan, Illinois Senate President Cullerton, the members of the Chicago delegation of the Illinois General Assembly and Governor Quinn.



Edward M. Burke, Alderman, 14th Ward

