



# City of Chicago



SR2014-208

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:** 4/2/2014

**Sponsor(s):** Burke (14)  
Solis (25)

**Type:** Resolution

**Title:** Call for Illinois General Assembly to adopt Senate Bill 977 to allow citizens whose predominant language is not English to serve on juries

**Committee(s) Assignment:** Committee on Human Relations

**SUBSTITUTE**  
**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 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**, Illinois State Senator Iris Martinez made further amendments to Senate Bill 977 which would create a pilot program involving the counties of Cook, DuPage, Lake, Will, and Kane. These counties would provide jurors an interpreter or translator throughout trial and jury deliberation if said jurors predominant language is not English; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 6, 2014, the Senate Judiciary Committee heard testimony on the amended Senate Bill 977 and voted the bill out of committee for consideration by the full Senate; and

**WHEREAS**, if adopted, Illinois would join New Mexico as the only states in the country to permit jurors to utilize an interpreter or translator, other than a sign language interpreter, for jury service; and

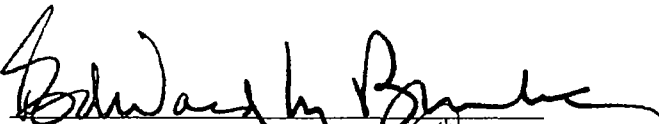
**WHEREAS**, the Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees a criminal defendant the right to trial by “an impartial jury”; and


**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 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, 14<sup>th</sup> Ward

  
Daniel Solis, Alderman, 25<sup>th</sup> Ward



**CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF CHICAGO**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

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**HUMAN RELATIONS**

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May 28, 2014

To the President and Members of the City Council:

Your committee on Human Relations, for which a meeting was held May 20, 2014, having had under consideration a resolution introduced by Alderman Burke (14<sup>th</sup>), Alderman Solis (25<sup>th</sup>), calling on the Illinois General Assembly to adopt Senate Bill 977 to allow citizens whose predominate language is not English to serve on juries. This recommendation was concurred in a voice vote of all committee members present with no dissenting votes.

Your committee on Human Relations, for which a meeting was held May 20, 2014, having had under consideration a resolution introduced by Alderman Burke (14<sup>th</sup>), Alderman Reboyras (30<sup>th</sup>), to call on the U.S. Government to stand in solidarity with the people of Venezuela as they protest for democracy, human rights and freedom of speech. This recommendation was concurred in a voice vote of all committee members present with no dissenting votes.

Respectfully submitted,

Ariel E. Reboyras, Chairman  
Committee on Human Relations