



# City of Chicago



R2015-14

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:** 1/21/2015

**Sponsor(s):** Emanuel (Mayor)  
Mendoza (Clerk)

**Type:** Resolution

**Title:** Tribute to late Honorable Judy Baar Topinka, Illinois  
Comptroller

**Committee(s) Assignment:**



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

RAHM EMANUEL  
MAYOR

January 21, 2015

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL  
OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith, together with City Clerk Susana A. Mendoza, a resolution honoring the life and memory of Judy Barr Topinka.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

Mayor



## RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, The Members of this Chamber were deeply saddened to learn of the death on December 10, 2014, at age 70, of Judy Baar Topinka, a longtime member of the Illinois General Assembly, a Chair of the Illinois Republican Party, the first woman to be elected as Illinois Treasurer, and the recently re-elected Comptroller of the State of Illinois; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Topinka was born on January 16, 1944 to Lillian Mary and William D. Baar, the children of Czech and Slovak immigrants. Her parents owned a small real estate business in Riverside, Illinois, the western suburb that Ms. Topinka called home. From a very young age, Ms. Topinka was taught the importance of hard work, self-sacrifice and fiscal prudence; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Topinka graduated in 1962 from Ferry Hall School in Lake Forest, Illinois. She earned a bachelor of science degree in 1966 from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism. In college, Ms. Topinka was a member of the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority. An accomplished musician, she played four instruments, and she fluently spoke English, Czech, Spanish and Polish. Later in life Ms. Topinka was named by her sorority's national chapter as one of its three "Outstanding Citizens"; and

**WHEREAS**, After graduating from college, Ms. Topinka worked for eleven years as a reporter for several award-winning community newspapers, rising through the ranks to become an editor. She also founded her own public relations firm; served as a public affairs executive for the American Medical Association; and became a public relations advisor to a number of local political candidates and organizations. Ms. Topinka's achievements as a journalist and local leader earned her awards from more than 250 civic, business, professional and social service organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, In 1981, Ms. Topinka began her storied political career in the Illinois General Assembly, where she served two terms in the House of Representatives before being elected in 1984 to the Illinois State Senate, where she served for ten years. One of the most beloved and respected political figures in the State of Illinois, Ms. Topinka quickly gained a reputation for competence, veracity, frankness and pragmatism. A fierce advocate for her constituents, Ms. Topinka was a firm believer in bipartisanship, and she willingly reached across the aisle to find common ground; and

**WHEREAS**, On November 8, 1994, Ms. Topinka was elected Illinois State Treasurer, becoming the first woman to hold this post and the first State Treasurer in Illinois history to win three consecutive terms. As Treasurer from 1994 to 2007, Ms. Topinka maintained a strong record of fiscal responsibility. Under her leadership, the Treasurer's Office earned record returns on its investments, more than 13,000 new jobs were created through an innovative linked deposits program, the largest agricultural loan program in the country was developed for farmers,

and one of the most affordable college savings programs in the Nation helped more than 120,000 Illinois families save for college; and

**WHEREAS**, In 2002, Ms. Topinka was elected Chair of the Illinois Republican Party, a position that she held until 2005. In March of 2006, Ms. Topinka was nominated as the Republican candidate for Governor of Illinois, becoming the first Republican woman to be nominated for that office; and

**WHEREAS**, A tireless advocate for Illinois taxpayers, Ms. Topinka was first elected as Illinois Comptroller in 2010. Determined to bring efficiency, transparency and accountability to every corner of government, Ms. Topinka created the Ledger, an online database that enabled taxpayers to access financial information about governmental operations; established the State Accounting Standards Board to provide oversight on fiscal reporting processes, and modernized the Comptroller's Office by implementing electronic payments and recordkeeping. Ms. Topinka was re-elected in November 2014; and

**WHEREAS**, A larger-than-life personality, whose sense of humor and smile brightened the day of everyone in her path, Ms. Topinka doted on her dogs, enjoyed drinking coffee, loved to dance to polka music and to play the accordion, and was passionate about finding loving homes for animals in need. An exceptional role model for women, this past summer Ms. Topinka was named one of the 100 Women of Influence by *Today's Chicago Woman*; and

**WHEREAS**, A smart, candid, energetic, vibrant and principled person, whose compassion for people defined her public service, Judy Baar Topinka will always be remembered as a voice for the common man and woman, and as a standard-bearer for honesty and integrity in government; and

**WHEREAS**, Judy Baar Topinka is survived by her son, Joseph; by her daughter-in-law, Christina; by her granddaughter, Alexandra Faith Baar Topinka; and by countless admirers and friends; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED**, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this twenty-first day of January, 2015, do hereby honor the life and memory of Judy Baar Topinka; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That suitable copies of this resolution be presented to the family of Judy Baar Topinka as a sign of our sympathy and good wishes.