



# City of Chicago



R2014-695

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	9/11/2014
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	Cappleman (46)
<b>Type:</b>	Resolution
<b>Title:</b>	Expression of support for abolition of slavery in Mauritania
<b>Committee(s) Assignment:</b>	

**A Resolution Supporting The Abolition of Slavery in Mauritania**

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois have a long and proud history of supporting the abolition of slavery;

WHEREAS, countless Chicagoans risked their lives to organize Underground Railroad stops to help enslaved Africans escape to freedom, and Chicago has been home to thousands of brave leaders in the fight against slavery – from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until the present day;

WHEREAS, a diverse coalition of Illinois organizations are honoring the 200 year legacy of abolitionism in our state by fighting modern-day slavery in the African nation of Mauritania, which ranks as the worst nation on Earth in terms of the percentage of its population held as slaves;

WHEREAS, 10% to 20% of the West African nation of Mauritania's 3.4 million residents are estimated to be enslaved, according to in-country organizations and investigative reporting;

WHEREAS, enslaved women and girls in Mauritania are regularly subject to sexual violence, including forced incest, in order to produce additional enslaved children for their masters;

WHEREAS, slavery was not criminalized in Mauritania until 2007 and no slaveholder in the country has ever been successfully prosecuted;

WHEREAS, the Mauritanian government has made only superficial attempts to enforce anti-slavery laws despite widespread knowledge of the practice;

WHEREAS, slavery in Mauritania exists in conjunction with racial bias against darker skinned Mauritians known as Haratine who routinely suffer significant economic, political, and social discrimination;

WHEREAS, the U.S. State Department's 2014 Report on Trafficking in Persons states that "Held for generations by slave-holding families, persons subjected to slavery are forced to work without pay as cattle herders and domestic servants;"

WHEREAS, the U.S. State Department's 2014 Report on Trafficking in Persons further states that the "Government of Mauritania does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so;"

WHEREAS, the U.S. State Department's 2014 Report on Trafficking in Persons further states that "the government failed to hold traffickers criminally accountable, and law enforcement and judicial personnel intervened on behalf of alleged offenders to thwart the progress of criminal prosecutions;"

WHEREAS, one of the notable accomplishments of the Chicago City Council in previous decades was its strong and public stances against another injustice in Africa - the cruelty of Apartheid in South Africa - and that this Chicago City Council stance helped the international movement to bring sanctions against - and eventually an end to - apartheid in South Africa.

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WHEREAS, Illinois' United States Senator Richard Durbin has this year secured U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee approval to support anti-slavery programs in Mauritania and worked in strong partnership with Illinois groups fighting trafficking and slavery wherever it exists;

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this 10<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2014, do hereby wholeheartedly support the efforts of diverse Illinois organizations supporting Championing Freedom: An Interfaith Initiative to End Slavery in Mauritania – an educational and advocacy event to be held on October 12<sup>th</sup>.

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this 10<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2014, do hereby support the final abolition of slavery in Mauritania and around the world, commend the anti-slavery work of Illinois' U.S. Senator Richard Durbin in securing U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee approval to support anti-slavery programs in Mauritania and engaging with global leaders to address this issue, and encourage President Barack Obama to make fighting slavery in Mauritania, and around the world, a priority.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the United States Congress and the United Nations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Cappleman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "James" and last name "Cappleman" clearly distinguishable.

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James Cappleman  
Alderman, 46<sup>th</sup> Ward