



City of Chicago



R2017-503

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date: 6/28/2017

Sponsor(s): Burke (14)
Reboyras (30)
Scott, Jr. (24)

Type: Resolution

Title: Call for Commissioner of Department of Aviation to appear before Committee on Finance to address plans for removing signatories to any Chicago Airport Use Agreement and Facilities Leases affiliated or partnered with airline flights to or from North Korea and certification from City Comptroller and City Treasurer that no City funds are deposited or invested through financial institutions that engage in financial transactions with North Korean government

Committee(s) Assignment: Committee on Finance

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago is a home rule unit of government pursuant to the 1970 Illinois Constitution, Article VII, Section 6(a); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to its home rule power, the City of Chicago may exercise any power and perform any function relating to its government and affairs including the power to regulate for the protection of the public health, safety, morals, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, said authority must at times be used to take a stance in the face of injustice and danger; and

WHEREAS, in January 2016, Otto Warmbier, a University of Virginia student, visited Pyongyang as part of a tour group and was arrested after being accused of committing a “hostile act” by attempting to take a political poster from a hotel; and

WHEREAS, after what was reported to be a one hour long trial, he was sentenced to fifteen years of hard labor; and

WHEREAS, in the course of what was to be a seventeen month imprisonment, North Korean officials report that he contracted botulism and slipped into a vegetative state after taking a sleeping pill, a statement challenged by the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, who examined Mr. Warmbier on June 13, 2017 after North Korea released him in a state of “unresponsive wakefulness;” and

WHEREAS, twenty-two year old Mr. Warmbier was returned to his Ohio family and passed away a week later; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Daniel Kanter, director of the University of Cincinnati’s Health Neurocritical Care Program, said Warmbier's MRI scan showed “extensive loss of brain tissue in all regions of the brain” but no evidence of a skull fracture; and

WHEREAS, reports that doctors who examined Mr. Warmbier upon his return home found extensive brain damage but could not explain the causes of his injury are coupled with accusations that he had been tortured while in captivity; and

WHEREAS, a neutral response to the violation of Mr. Warmbier’s human rights puts every other American on North Korean soil at risk and makes North Korea’s actions permissible without a fear of repercussions; and

WHEREAS, Chicago has a history of putting its economic might on the side of justice in human rights matters that might span globally but resonate locally; and

WHEREAS, examples of such efforts include the adoption of the MacBride Principles in February of 1993, which ensures that companies seeking business with the City of Chicago that

also conduct business in Northern Ireland adhere to principles enacted to counter religious-based discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago took that stance to underscore its adherence to, and solidarity with, efforts to abide by “principles of fair and equal employment opportunity,” and in so doing, showing that Chicago does not sit idly at the sight of injustice; and

WHEREAS, in a similar spirit of solidarity, the City Council sought to curtail involvement with financial institutions having business dealings with Swiss banks alleged to have refused Holocaust survivors’ claims for Holocaust victim deposits in those banks; and

WHEREAS, the City Council took a more stern approach to the anti-apartheid ordinances passed by New York and California in 1990 and imposed higher penalties on businesses seeking contracts with the City while maintaining business ties with South Africa; and

WHEREAS, from rejecting predatory lending practices to requiring disclosure of slavery era business, the City of Chicago has routinely required that business practices with and within the City align with its principles; and

WHEREAS, such principles include refusing to aid in the support of a totalitarian government, characterized by its systematic human rights violations and military threats, the nature of which have drawn national and international economic sanctions including a decades old near-total U.S. embargo; and

WHEREAS, the impunity with which Mr. Warmbier’s life was taken is emblematic of the ongoing and growing threat emanating from that corner of the world; and

WHEREAS, economic and financial measures can be highly effective leverage in efforts to neutralize such threats to our safety and affronts to our values; and

WHEREAS, with its status as a global transportation hub and thus part of a powerful local and international economic engine, Chicago can certainly expect that those who avail themselves of its world-class airport services do not in turn support economies that foster brutal and menacing regimes; and

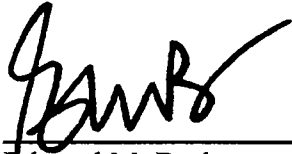
WHEREAS, that expectation similarly applies to the financial institutions with which the City partners; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Warmbier’s fate at the hands of the North Korean government, its continuous holding of three additional American citizens on North Korean soil, and the peril threatened by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea have moved this City Council to declare any friend to North Korea *persona non grata* in Chicago; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:

That the Commissioner of the Department of Aviation appear before the City Council Committee on Finance to address plans to remove any signatories to any Chicago Airport Use Agreement and Facilities Leases ("Use Agreements") that are or partner with airlines that have flights to or from North Korea; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City Comptroller and the Treasurer appear before the City Council Committee on Finance to certify that no City funds are deposited in or invested through a financial institution that engages in any financial transactions with an entity that, in turn, undertakes financial transactions with North Korean government, business, or other entity.



Edward M. Burke
Alderman, 14th Ward

