



# City of Chicago



R2014-448

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

**Meeting Date:**

6/25/2014

**Sponsor(s):**

O'Connor (40)

O'Shea (19)

**Type:**

Resolution

**Title:**

Calling on Cook County Recorder of Deeds to enforce stronger investigative measures of authenticity of documents presented to prevent fraudulent liens against homes to extort money from homeowners

**Committee(s) Assignment:**

Committee on Housing and Real Estate

City Council  
June 25, 2014

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, The FBI reports that recording of fraudulent documents is an increasing form of white-collar crime nationwide. Cases have been documented in New York, California, and everywhere in between, including Chicago; and

**WHEREAS**, Criminals have recorded fraudulent liens against homes in order to harass enemies or to extort money from homeowners intimidated by the legal hurdles involved in clearing title; and

**WHEREAS**, Criminals have recorded fraudulent deeds making it falsely appear that they are the owners of homes. The "House Thieves" have then taken out mortgages on the homes, or even sold the homes. In some cases, the criminals have gone so far as to change the locks when the legitimate homeowner is away from home, brazenly showing the forged documents to police as proof of their right to do so; and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County Recorder of Deeds Karen A. Yarbrough has been a leader in the fight against "House Stealing" and other crimes involving fraudulent document recording. She widened the use of the "Fraud Alert" system, whereby homeowners are notified of any document recorded against their property. She successfully advocated for the passage of laws that allow a Recorder of Deeds to forward cases of suspected property fraud to an expedited administrative law review process, to increase the penalties for unlawful clouding of a title, and to require notaries to forward the records of every property transfer they notarize to the Recorder of Deeds office. She has also worked tirelessly to raise public awareness of the crime; and

**WHEREAS**, Despite Recorder Yarbrough's efforts, Illinois law requires Recorders of Deeds to record any document presented to them with the needed information and fees. Recorders are forbidden to investigate the authenticity of documents before recording; and

**WHEREAS**, House Thieves typically hide their true identities behind aliases and sham corporations; and

**WHEREAS**, Time is of the essence in apprehending House Thieves, because by the time the true homeowners become aware of the crime and followed the legal process to correct it, the perpetrators moved on to a new identity, taking the proceeds of sham sales or mortgages with them; now therefore:

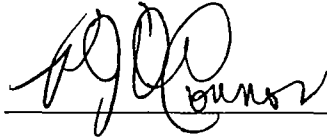
**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Mayor and City Council of the City of Chicago gathered here on this 28<sup>th</sup> Day of May, 2014, call on Cook County Recorder of Deeds Karen A. Yarbrough to take the further step of requiring people to provide valid government-issued photo identification, including identification described in §2-173-040 of the Municipal

HOUSING &  
FRAUD RESOLUTION

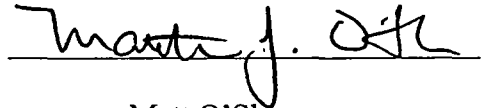
Code, along with valid documentation of their current address when presenting documents for recording; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Mayor and City Council call on Recorder Yarbrough to maintain copies of said identification in order to aid investigations of suspected fraud; and

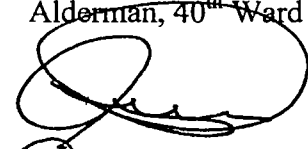
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a suitable copy of this resolution be provided to Cook County Recorder of Deeds Karen A. Yarbrough.




Patrick J. O'Connor  
Alderman, 40<sup>th</sup> Ward




Matt O'Shea  
Alderman, 19<sup>th</sup> Ward



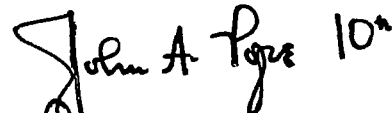
30<sup>th</sup> Ward



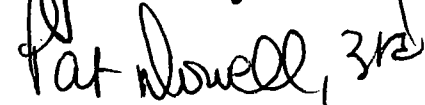
38<sup>th</sup>



18<sup>th</sup>



10<sup>th</sup>



3<sup>rd</sup>

Chicago City Council Co-Sponsor Addition/Change

Document No.: R2014-448

Subject: Calling on Cook County Recorder of Deeds  
and preventing fraudulent lien claims.

Please Add Or Change The Co-Sponsor As Shown Below.

Alderman Ray Suarez (31 Ward)

Alderman Lona Lane (18 Ward)

Alderman Ariel E. Reboyras (30 Ward)

Alderman John A. Pope (10 Ward)

Alderman Timothy M. Cullerton (38 Ward)

Alderman Pat Dowell (3 Ward)

Please Remove Or Change The Co-Sponsor As Shown Below.

Alderman \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_ Ward)

Alderman \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_ Ward)

Alderman \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_ Ward)

Alderman \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_ Ward)

Alderman \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_ Ward)

Date Filed \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

  
Principal Sponsor

RECEIVED  
#3  
2014 JUL 28 AM 9:59  
OFFICE OF THE  
CITY CLERK

Final copies to be filed with:

- Chairman of Committee to which legislation was referred
- City Clerk



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# RAY SUAREZ

ALDERMAN, 31<sup>ST</sup> WARD  
VICE MAYOR - CITY OF CHICAGO

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## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS:

HOUSING AND REAL ESTATE  
(CHAIRMAN)

COMMITTEES, RULES AND ETHICS  
(VICE-CHAIRMAN)

AVIATION

BUDGET AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

FINANCE

TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WAY

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND AUDIT

ZONING, LANDMARKS AND BUILDING STANDARDS

July 30, 2014  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

## TO THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL:

Your Committee on Housing and Real Estate which was referred a Resolution, by Alderman Patrick J. O'Connor (40<sup>th</sup> Ward), Alderman Matt O'Shea (19<sup>th</sup> Ward), Alderman Ray Suarez (31<sup>st</sup> Ward), Alderman Lona Lane (18<sup>th</sup> Ward), Alderman John A. Pope (10<sup>th</sup> Ward), Alderman Ariel E. Reboyras (30<sup>th</sup> Ward), Alderman Pat Dowell (3<sup>rd</sup> Ward) and Alderman Timothy M. Cullerton (38<sup>th</sup> Ward) calling on the Cook County Recorder of Deeds to enforce stronger investigative measures of authenticity of documents presented to prevent fraudulent liens against homes to extort money from homeowners.  
(R2014-448)

Having the same under advisement, begs leave to report and recommend that Your Honorable Body **Pass** the proposed resolution transmitted herewith.

This recommendation was concurred in by a unanimous vote of the members of the committee present with no dissenting votes.

(signed)

  
Ray Suarez, Chairman  
Committee on Housing & Real Estate