



City of Chicago



R2018-842

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:

7/23/2018

Sponsor(s):

Burke (14)
Solis (25)
Reboyas (30)

Type:

Resolution

Title:

Call for hearing to address City licensing of child welfare agencies, including oversight of funding disbursed to Heartland Alliance

Committee(s) Assignment:

Committee on Finance

(21)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, it is now widely known that Chicago is at least a temporary home to children who have been forcibly separated from their parents at the U.S. and Mexico border and placed in shelters by federal authorities; and

WHEREAS, news reports of distressing abuse and mistreatment allegations at a state-licensed Chicago shelter have brought into focus the duties and responsibilities that the City has to protect the health, safety, and welfare of these children; and

WHEREAS, shelter conditions have come to the forefront of public awareness in the aftermath of a "zero tolerance" federal immigration policy that led to the separation of 2,000 migrant children from their parents over a six-week period between April 18 and May 31, 2018; and

WHEREAS, although a federal judge has since ordered reunifications by specific deadlines, these have not been met and the order does not eliminate the long-standing existence of these shelters for unaccompanied migrant children; and

WHEREAS, since 2003, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has awarded nearly \$5 billion in grants through the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), mostly to religious and nonprofit organizations in eighteen (18) states, to house children who arrive in the country unaccompanied; and

WHEREAS, ORR affiliated shelters are not designed for long-term residency, they are meant to serve as intermediaries, usually placing children with a parent, a close family member, a family friend, or, in rare cases, in a foster home within a month and typically provide an array of social services, such as education, food, clothing, and mental health services; and

WHEREAS, Heartland Alliance, an Illinois-licensed child welfare agency, is under contract with ORR as the sole provider of these services in the City of Chicago, serving seventy-three (73) children recently separated from their parents at the border; and

WHEREAS, recently United States Senator Richard Durbin urged HHS's Office of the Inspector General, to investigate a facility run by Heartland Alliance in Chicago, Casa Guadalupe, after the *Washington Post* reported that there had been allegations of abuse at this facility; and

WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, which licenses the agency, has launched an investigation due to the claims; and

WHEREAS, the current political climate has brought to light both the ever-expanding role of these migrant children shelters and the extent to which the resources and capabilities of those charged with their oversight are increasingly burdened and strained; and

WHEREAS, the members of this City Council seek to ensure that the City apply its highest health and safety standards and oversight to ensure that these facilities offer safe and suitable conditions for children in their care; and

WHEREAS, the City has awarded funds to Heartland Alliance, a portion of which includes funds for legal services for unaccompanied minors; and

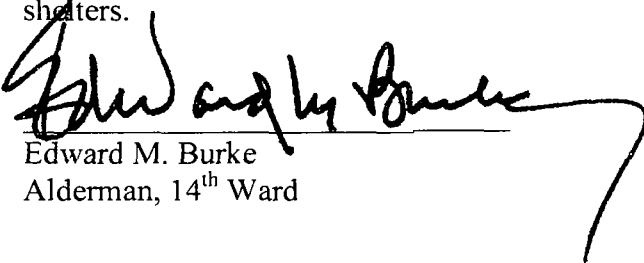
WHEREAS, the City has a responsibility to secure the health and well-being of these children who, regardless of the circumstances that brought them here, and notwithstanding how long their stay, are now also Chicago's children; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

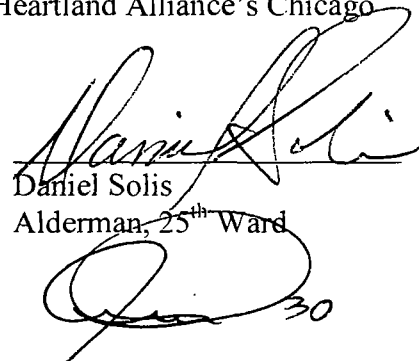
That the members of the City Council do hereby call on the Corporation Counsel and the Commissioner of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection or their designees to appear before the Committee on Finance to address City licensing of child welfare agencies in Chicago; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Budget Director appear before the Committee on Finance to address the nature, status, and oversight of funding disbursed by the City to Heartland Alliance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that representatives from Heartland Alliance do hereby appear before the Committee on Finance to address conditions at Heartland Alliance's Chicago shelters.



Edward M. Burke
Alderman, 14th Ward



Daniel Solis
Alderman, 25th Ward

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(A1)

CHICAGO July 25, 2018

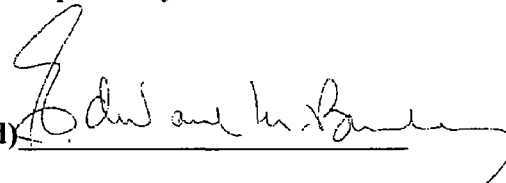
To the President and Members of the City Council:

Your Committee on Finance having had under consideration a resolution calling for the Corporation Counsel, the Commissioner of the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, the Budget Director and representatives of Heartland Alliance to appear before the Committee on Finance to address the issue of inspections and oversight of child welfare agencies in Chicago that provide housing for unaccompanied migrant children.

Having had 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 viva voce vote of members of the committee with _____ dissenting vote(s).

Respectfully submitted

(signed) 

Chairman