



# City of Chicago



R2018-1059

Office of the City Clerk

## Document Tracking Sheet

<b>Meeting Date:</b>	9/20/2018
<b>Sponsor(s):</b>	Burke (14)
<b>Type:</b>	Resolution
<b>Title:</b>	Call for Illinois congressional delegation to support passage of Veterans and Visa Protection Act
<b>Committee(s) Assignment:</b>	Committee on Finance

## RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, National Public Radio (NPR) is among the outlets highlighting the issue of U.S. Military is discharging and deporting immigrant recruits who were promised citizenship; and

WHEREAS, the United States has a long history of immigrants serving in the military, beginning with the Revolutionary War; and

WHEREAS, according to *USA Today* approximately 5,000 foreign born recruits join the military each year, and approximately 511,000 veterans who are immigrants live in the United States, making up approximately three percent (3%) of the total veteran population; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago has longstanding commitments to its veteran and immigrant populations; and

WHEREAS, for example, the City has established the City of Chicago's Veterans Resource Office, designed to serve as a one-stop clearing house designed to provide assistance for better living and health services to veterans of the United States armed forces and their surviving spouses; and

WHEREAS, with respect to immigration the City of Chicago has adopted a Welcoming City Ordinance, recognized the use of *matricula consular* cards, and created a Legal Defense Fund; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago has endeavored to ensure the equal treatment and dignity of veterans and immigrants; and

WHEREAS, until recently the U.S. Military has welcomed non-citizens among their ranks, in World War I nearly a quarter of the men sent to fight in Europe were foreign born; and

WHEREAS, in 2008 the Pentagon established the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI) program for this purpose; and

WHEREAS, through the MANVI program, foreign born recruits who were already in the United States on a legal basis could serve in the military in exchange for an expedited path to citizenship, in accordance with the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA); and

WHEREAS, over 10,000 recruits have been through the MANVI program, with some attaining citizenship by the end of their training; and

WHEREAS, the current administration has forcibly discharged foreign born recruits and deported them; and

WHEREAS, Xionghou Zhang is one of the soldiers pushed out of the program, who entered the United States on a student visa in 2014 and enlisted in 2016; and

WHEREAS, after securing a degree in management, marrying and having a child, the Army informed Mr. Zhang that he was being released from the program with no way to appeal; and

WHEREAS, after speaking to the *New York Times*, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents appeared at Mr. Zhang's door informing him that he "was going to be deported," and his next hearing in deportation proceedings would be in October; and

WHEREAS, ICE agents deemed Mr. Zhang to be a flight risk and have required him and his wife to wear GPS ankle monitors; and

WHEREAS, deporting veterans from a country they risked their lives to protect is shocking to the American moral consciousness and betrays the promise of expedited citizenship held out to so many; and

WHEREAS, Chicago residents have been impacted by changes in policy at the federal level; and

WHEREAS, for example, on March 23, 2018, Miguel Perez, Jr. an army veteran from Chicago who had been in the United States since age eight and served two tours in Afghanistan was deported to Mexico because of a 2008 drug-trafficking conviction; and

WHEREAS, Perez, Jr. was taken into custody by ICE officials after having served fifteen years in prison; and

WHEREAS, Perez Jr.'s parents and sister are naturalized U.S. citizens, and another sister is an American citizen by birth; and

WHEREAS, Perez Jr. was deported without the customary warning and opportunity to say goodbye to his family, and left in Matamoros, a border town in the state of Tamaulipas, where the U.S. State Department has warned Americans not to travel because of high crime; and

WHEREAS, there are currently legislative efforts to stem inequalities and injustices in the immigration system; and


WHEREAS, for example, United State Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, herself a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel, last year introduced Senate Bill 1704, the Veterans and Visa Protection Act, which would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a veterans visa program to permit veterans who have been removed from the United States to return as immigrants, and for other purposes; and

WHEREAS, other legislation introduced in the 115th Congress would address this issue in a variety of ways: House Bill 3563 would remove the failure to file a naturalization application (by a veteran who was previously eligible to do so) as a reason for deporting an honorably discharged U.S. veteran, and House Bill 2761 would authorize DHS to temporarily admit U.S. veterans residing abroad who seek health care from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago reaffirms its longstanding commitments to veterans and immigrants; NOW THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council do hereby urge the Illinois delegation gathered in Congress to pass the Veterans and Visa Protection Act, which would require the Secretary of Homeland Security to establish a veterans visa program to permit veterans who have been removed from the United States to return as immigrants, and for other purposes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to the Chicago delegation of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senators from Illinois, Tammy Duckworth and Richard J. Durbin.



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Edward M. Burke  
Alderman, 14<sup>th</sup> Ward

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Gilbert Villegas  
Alderman, 36<sup>th</sup> Ward

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CHICAGO September 20, 2018

**To the President and Members of the City Council:**

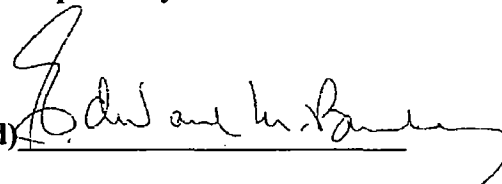
**Your Committee on Finance having had under consideration a resolution calling for support of efforts to call attention to the plight of deported United States military veterans.**

Direct Introduction

**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**