



# Office of the City Clerk

City Hall  
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Chicago, IL 60602  
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## Legislation Text

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**File #:** R2014-828, **Version:** 1

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### RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, American statesman Fred Allen Boyd, Jr., once observed that: "America's fighting men and women sacrifice much to ensure that our great Nation remains free. We owe a debt of gratitude to the soldiers that have paid the ultimate price for this cause, as well as to those who have been blessed enough to return from the battlefield unscathed;" and

WHEREAS, Members of the United States Armed Forces who have been killed in action have served our Country with distinction and courage. It is incumbent upon all Americans to honor these loyal patriots when they are returned home to be laid to rest; and

WHEREAS, Section 562 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act prescribes the protocol to be used to transport a member of the United States Armed Forces who has died in a combat theater of operations and whose remains are returned to the United States; and

WHEREAS, The protocol established by the United States Department of Defense directs that the fallen soldier's remains, unless otherwise directed by his or her next of kin, shall be continuously escorted by a color guard, who shall travel with the remains during transportation; met at the place to which transportation is made; accorded appropriate honors at the arrival of the remains; and transferred from the aircraft with solemn dignity, by carrying out the remains with a flag draped over the casket to a hearse for travel to a funeral home or other place requested by the family; and

WHEREAS, During America's Civil War, a tradition began whereby the bodies of fallen veterans were transported by a military caisson wagon, a tradition that continues to this day to honor the ultimate sacrifice made by our fallen heroes; and

WHEREAS, Pursuant to Article VII, Section 6, of the 1970 Illinois Constitution, the City of Chicago is a home rule municipality and, as such, may exercise any power and perform any function related to its government and affairs; and

WHEREAS, The City owns and operates, through its Department of Aviation, airports known as Chicago O'Hare International Airport ("O'Hare") and Chicago Midway International Airport ("Midway") with the power to lease premises and facilities and to grant rights and privileges with respect thereto; and

WHEREAS, The Mayor and Chicago City Council wish to honor the service and sacrifice of all fallen military heroes returning to Chicago by ensuring that an appropriately decorated funeral caisson is available for all flights bearing the body of a fallen serviceman or servicewoman; and

WHEREAS, These military caissons shall be dedicated in honor of Alderman James Balcer, a former member of the U.S. Marine Corps, who served with distinction during the Vietnam War and is a recipient of a Bronze Star and three Purple Hearts; and

WHEREAS, During his long and distinguished career serving on Chicago's City Council and as the Director of Veterans Affairs, Alderman Balcer has championed many causes related to our military veterans, and he has worked tirelessly not only to honor the lives of those who have died in the line of duty but to ensure that returning veterans and their families receive the care and support they need and deserve; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this fifth day of November, 2014, do hereby call upon the air carriers using Chicago O'Hare International Airport and Chicago Midway International Airport to pledge to work with the Chicago Department of Aviation to ensure that the flag-draped caskets of our fallen heroes are transported with utmost dignity, using the designated Alderman James Balcer Caissons and in accordance with the standards required by the United States Department of Defense; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be delivered to Chicago's Department of Aviation, and to the local offices of all air carriers using Chicago O'Hare International Airport and Chicago Midway International Airport.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

RAHM EMANUEL MAYOR

November 3, 2014

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CHAIRMAN AN AND  
MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON  
FINANCE

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith, together with Alderman Burke, a resolution regarding the designation of certain military funeral caissons in honor of Alderman James Balcer.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

CHICAGO November 5, 2014

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

**Your Committee on Finance having had under consideration**

A proposed resolution concerning the transportation of fallen military heroes returning to Chicago airports.

Having had the same under advisement, begs leave to report and recommend that your Honorable Body pass the proposed Ordinance Transmitted Herewith

**This recommendation was concurred in by  
of members of the committee with dissenting vote(s)7**

**(a (viva voce vote**

**Chairman**

**Respectfully submitted**