



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Text

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**File #:** R2018-302, **Version:** 1

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### RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, vehicular heatstroke can befall a child with the most conscientious parent or caregiver in a tragedy compounded by the fact that it is preventable; and

WHEREAS, the first heatstroke death of 2018 has already occurred in Miami, Florida in the beginning of March, as a child died after being forgotten in the backseat of a car while the mother went to work; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2017 there were 42 heatstroke deaths of children in vehicles in the United States, a 63% increase from 2015; and

WHEREAS, a child's body overheats three to five times faster than an adult's and when a child's body temperature reaches 107 degrees, they can die of heatstroke; and

WHEREAS, it only takes a car 10 minutes to heat up 20 degrees internally and become deadly to a child; and

WHEREAS, according to KidsAndCars.org <<http://KidsAndCars.org>>, an advocacy group that conducts research on car-related child endangerment, the temperature inside a vehicle can reach 110 degrees when there is an outside temperature of just 60 degrees; and

WHEREAS, the group notes that, even with slightly open windows, a car's internal temperature can reach 125 degrees in a matter of minutes; and

WHEREAS, the organization also finds that, since 1994, 804 children have died from heat-related illnesses in cars in the United States, including 20 children in Illinois; and

WHEREAS, in these 804 deaths, approximately 55% of the children were unknowingly left in the car, 28% of children climbed in on their own, and another 13% were knowingly left in the car; and

WHEREAS, nationally, on average, 37 children die each year from heat-related deaths after being trapped inside vehicles; and

WHEREAS, while not as prevalent as heat-related deaths, children left in cold vehicles are at an increased risk for both hyperthermia and hypothermia, according to Dr. Letitia Ryan, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Johns Hopkins Children's Center; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the NHTSA launched a public education campaign entitled "Where's baby? Look before you lock," on National Heatstroke Day, which takes place annually on July 31 and highlights the dangers of

vehicle-induced heatstroke; and

WHEREAS, the campaign highlights the dangers of vehicle-induced heatstroke and educates caregivers on how to avoid these types of tragedies; and

WHEREAS, Dr. David Diamond, a professor of psychology at the University of South Florida has studied the science behind the phenomenon of children forgotten in cars and has observed that "any person is capable of forgetting a child in a car under circumstances where a parent is going through a routine and the child is in the back" and if the routine changes, it can prove fatal; and

WHEREAS, the former U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Fox stated that "even one heatstroke death is one too many because every death caused by leaving a child unattended in a hot car is one hundred percent avoidable;" and

WHEREAS, the Chicago Police Department highlights on its website the risk of leaving children unattended in parked cars because they are at the greatest risk of heat stroke, and possibly death; and

WHEREAS, in July 2017, a toddler was left unattended in a car in a Portillo's restaurant parking lot on the Near West Side for fifteen minutes while the temperature was 80 degrees and the car windows were closed; and

WHEREAS, Wal-Mart stores around the country have signs posted at entrances stating, "Look before you leave" to remind customers to not leave kids unattended in a car; and

WHEREAS, some grocery stores have created education campaigns including signs posted at entrances and announcements made over the in-store intercom reminding parents to check their cars to help prevent kids from being left unattended; and

WHEREAS, public awareness campaigns have served to offer parents reminders as well as tips such as putting necessary items in the backseat, a reminder stuffed animal in the passenger seat, and the like; and

WHEREAS, multifaceted approaches are valued and necessary as we await car industry and regulatory action that would require car manufacturers to include sensors in rear seats to prevent children from being forgotten; and

WHEREAS, in anticipation of the upcoming summer, and seeking to avoid even a single child injury or death due to vehicular heat stroke, this City Council seeks to deploy a City-wide effort to the eradication of this risk; now, therefore,

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

Alderman, 14<sup>m</sup> Ward

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That the Department of Public Health, the Office of Emergency Management and Communications, the Chicago Fire Department, and the Chicago Police Department appear before the Committee on Public Safety to

address child car safety with respect to heat and cold exposure and specify recommended City action with respect to public notices, partnerships, policies and other efforts the City may undertake to prevent this form of child endangerment.

CHICAGO April 18,2018

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

Your Committee on Finance having had under consideration a resolution calling for various city departments to appear before the Committee on Public Safety to address child car safety.

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Having had the same under advisement, begs leave to report and recommend that your Honorable Body refer the proposed Resolution Transmitted Herewith to the Committee on Public Safety.

**This recommendation was concurred in by** (alwva voce vote^)  
**of members of the committee with** **dissenting vote(sJT**

**Respectfully submitted**  
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**(signed)<sup>1</sup>;**

**Chairman**