



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Text

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

RAHM EMANUEL  
MAYOR

November 1, 2016

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE  
CITY OF CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith, together with Alderman Solis, a congratulatory resolution concerning Bernarda Lo Wong and Esther Wong.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Mayor

Very truly yours,

### **RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, Bernarda "Bernie" Lo Wong is a founder and the President of the Chinese American Service League (CASL), and Esther Wong is its Executive Director. CASL is the largest, most comprehensive social service agency in the Midwest dedicated to serving the needs of Chinese Americans; and

WHEREAS, Bernie was born and raised in Hong Kong. At eighteen, she moved to Sioux City, Iowa to

earn a BA. in Sociology from Briar Cliff University and later a Master's Degree in Social Work from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri; and

WHEREAS, Esther, who is fluent in English and Chinese (Cantonese, Mandarin and Taishanese), holds a B.A. from the University of Hong Kong and a MA. from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration and is a member of the National Association of Social Workers and the Academy of Certified Social Workers; and

WHEREAS, In 1979, Bernie, Esther and their friends began building CASL in an effort to help new immigrants overcome the challenges of a new culture and language; and

WHEREAS, Under Bernie's leadership, CASL has grown from a one-person shop in 1979 with an annual budget of \$32,000 to a \$13.5 million agency, providing child services, elder services, employment training services, family counseling, and housing and financial education to over 17,000 clients of all ages and backgrounds each year; and

WHEREAS, Bernie is an active community member and Chair of the Mayor's Advisory Council on Asian Affairs. She was the first Asian appointed to the Board of Directors of United Way of Chicago and the Chicago Public Library. She also served on the Governor's Asian Advisory Council and Leadership of Greater Chicago Board; and

WHEREAS, Bernie and Esther give generously of their time. Bernie serves as a board member on the Chicago Commission on Human Relations; National Asian Pacific Center on Aging; Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and Council for the Illinois Department on Aging. Bernie is also a founding member of Chinese Immigrant Service Agencies Network International. Esther serves as a board member on the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development; Coalition of African, Arab, Asian, European, and Latino Immigrants of Illinois; Coalition for Limited English Speaking Elders; and the Chicago Jobs Council; and ,

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WHEREAS, Bernie has earned many awards for her work, including the Alumna of the Year Award from Briar Cliff University (1988), the Commissioner's Team Award from the Social Security Administration (1997), the Luminary Senior Award from the Chicago Department on Aging (2002), the Community Organizer Trailblazer Award from Rainbow/Push

Coalition (2004), the Distinguished Alumni Award from the School of Social Work at Washington University (2006), the Edward J. Williams Community Leadership Award from Harris Bank (2010), the Champion of Change Award as part of President Obama's "Winning the Future" initiative (2012), the Outstanding Community Leader Award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals (2012), the YWCA Racial Justice Award (2012), the Chicago History Museum's Jane Addams Making History Award for Distinction in Social Service (2013), the "Remarkable Woman" award by the Chicago Tribune (2013), the Washington University Distinguished Alumni Award (2015), the Fifth Third Bank Community Leader Award (2015), Illinois Treasurer Michael Frerichs' Outstanding Leader Award (2016), and the Briar Cliff University Distinguished Alumni

Award (2016), and was named one of "100 Women of Influence" by Today's Chicago Woman; and

WHEREAS, In 1987, Mayor Harold Washington awarded Esther the Mayor's Commission on Women's Affairs' Woman of the Year Award. In 2004, the Asian American Coalition of Chicago presented the Community Services Award to her in recognition of Esther's outstanding leadership and dedicated service to the Asian American community of Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Bernie's and Esther's dedication to serving others with dignity and respect, and their commitment to the welfare of others and the City of Chicago are truly exemplary; now, therefore,

BE IT BE RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this first day of November, 2016, do hereby honor and thank Bernarda Lo Wong and Esther Wong for their invaluable service to the citizens of Chicago; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be presented to Bernarda Lo Wong and Esther Wong as a token of our appreciation, gratitude, and respect.