



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Text

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**File #:** R2017-829, **Version:** 1

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### RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, with gross revenues reportedly nearing \$10 billion in 2016, Major League Baseball's world-wide fan base and favored pastime status is unquestioned; and

WHEREAS, the joy of spectatorship is not without risks, as attendees are cautioned to be vigilant of high-speed balls or bats careening from the field and in their direction; and

WHEREAS, to mitigate those risks, Major League Baseball (MLB) has recommended guidelines for protective netting between the playing field and parts of the spectator areas; and

WHEREAS, different team stadiums adhere to different netting practices; and

WHEREAS, in September 2017 a two year old girl was struck by a 105 mile per hour (mph) baseball at a stadium with a netting arrangement that did not comply with the MLB guidelines; and

WHEREAS, in June 2015, a spectator at a Boston Red Sox versus Oakland Athletics game was struck in the face by a broken baseball bat and sustained life threatening injuries; and

WHEREAS, Bloomberg News reports that 1,750 fans were injured in 2014 by foul or errant balls in the stands at MLB games, with injuries ranging from cuts and bruises to shattered bones, skull fractures and even nerve and brain damage; and

WHEREAS, according to statistician Edwin Comber, 73% of foul balls hit the stands during MLB games; and

WHEREAS, according to an analysis by Bloomberg, spectator strikes occur more often than strikes to players at the plate; and

WHEREAS, indeed, hitting the ball beyond the field of play is a hallmark of the sport's competitiveness, and although not all home runs involve a ball reaching the stands, it is notable that the 2016 season boasted 701 more home runs than in the year before, which in turn saw 723 more home runs than in 2015; and

WHEREAS, as plays increase in power, spectator safety must be reconsidered and measures should be adjusted accordingly; and

WHEREAS, the MLB recommends that netting be installed to the near end of each team's dugout and within seventy (70) feet of home plate; and

WHEREAS, the MLB Commissioner has vowed to increase safety efforts in the wake of recent incidents, and players themselves have voiced support for the extension of netting; and

WHEREAS, major cities including New York City have taken steps to extend netting in an effort to reduce the severity and number of fan injuries each year; and

WHEREAS, MLB clubs including the Chicago White Sox and Chicago Cubs have pledged to extend protective

netting by Opening Day 2018; and

**WHEREAS, as proud home to two world champion baseball teams, the City of Chicago stands to be at the forefront of efforts to ensure the continued safe enjoyment of this storied pastime; NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

**Edward M. Burke Alderman, 14\* Ward**

**That the Members of this City Council urge the respective management teams of the Chicago White Sox and the Chicago Cubs to not only abide by the MLB standard for protective netting but to exceed such minimum guidelines and lead the league in spectator safety standards. Included in those protection efforts should be a reconsideration of any spectator "assumption of risk" policy that protects baseball clubs from liability for injuries resulting from spectator contact with any object ejected from the field of play in the course of a game.**

CHICAGO October 11, 2017

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

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

A resolution calling upon the Chicago White Sox and Chicago Cubs to lead the league in terms of protective netting practices and spectator safety precautions.

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  
of members of the committee with**

**dissentmj**

**Respectfully submitted**  
**(signed**

**7**

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**Chairman**