



Office of the City Clerk

City Hall
121 N. LaSalle St.
Room 107
Chicago, IL 60602
www.chicityclerk.com

Legislation Text

File #: R2012-909, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, While child abuse and neglect are found among all socioeconomic and cultural groups, some significant contributing variables, including poverty, neighborhood dysfunction, substance abuse, mental health problems, children with special needs, unemployment, financial difficulties and lack of social support, are found in greater frequency within families where abusive and neglectful behavior occurs; and

WHEREAS, Every year there are 3.3 million reports of child abuse made in the United States, involving nearly 6 million children, and the United States has the worst record among the industrialized nations for abuse-related child fatalities, losing five children every day; and

WHEREAS, The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is charged with protecting vulnerable children from harm; however, the most recent data published on abuse-related child fatalities show that Illinois has a slightly higher rate than other states; and

WHEREAS, Tragically, even after being warned of possible abuse and neglect, DCFS has been hampered in its efforts to protect some children, with more than 200 children with prior DCFS involvement being slain between 2000 and 2011; and

WHEREAS, A recent report by the Inspector General for DCFS identified systemic problems with the agency, including the mishandling of several cases which lead to the death of the children involved, and a recent investigation by the Chicago Tribune found that, in addition to investigative caseloads being too high with the biggest trouble spots in Cook County, Chicago's collar counties and southern Illinois, there were problems with DCFS staff and contractual workers being poorly trained, making serious errors, breaking rules and falsifying reports; and

WHEREAS, In the most recent Illinois budget, DCFS was cut by nearly \$90 million, forcing the elimination of 375 positions through layoffs and unfilled positions, which will only exacerbate existing problems; and

WHEREAS, The consequences of child abuse and neglect can be devastating, not only for the child, but for the family and whole community, and it is imperative that we take all necessary actions to protect the most vulnerable of children; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this third day of October, 2012, do hereby request that the City Council Committee on Education and Child Development hold a hearing on effective methods of identifying, reporting, investigating, and preventing child abuse and neglect, and to invite Richard H. Calica, Director of DCFS and Evelyn Diaz, Commissioner of Family and Support Services, to provide information regarding their agencies' efforts in this area; and

Alderman Emma Mitts 37* Ward

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copie^pf this resolution be sent to the Committee on Education

and Child Development and Ricl^aral-^ Calica, Director of DCFS and Evelyn Comrr/ssioner

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