



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, During the Japanese colonial and wartime expansion of Asia and the Pacific Islands from 1932 through the duration of World War II, approximately 200,000 women and girls were coerced into a system of forced military prostitution; and

WHEREAS, The term "comfort women" was a euphemism used by the Japanese government to describe women and girls forced into sexual slavery by the Imperial Japanese military at camps, known as "comfort stations"; and

WHEREAS, The majority of "comfort women" were of Korean or Chinese descent, but women from Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia, and the Netherlands were also interned in military camps run directly by the Imperial Japanese military or private agents working for the military; and

WHEREAS, Some of the women were sold to these military camps as minors, others were deceptively recruited by middlemen with the promise of employment and financial security, and still others were forcibly kidnapped and forced to become "sexual slaves" for soldiers stationed throughout the Japanese occupied territories; and

WHEREAS, Approximately three-quarters of the "comfort women" have died as a direct result of the brutality inflicted upon them during their internment; some of those who survived were left infertile due to sexual violence or sexually transmitted disease; and many are now dying without an official acknowledgement or apology by the Japanese government of the suffering they endured during their forced internment in these military "comfort stations"; and

WHEREAS, The stories of the "comfort women" are a critical part of the history of human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, The United Nations reports that 2.4 million people across the globe are victims of human trafficking at any one time, and 80 percent of them are being exploited as sexual slaves; and

WHEREAS, At least 16,000 women and girls are involved in the sex trade every year in Chicago, many of whom are victims of human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, In 2007, the United States House of Representatives passed H.R. 121 which called upon the Japanese government to accept historical responsibility for the sexual enslavement of "comfort women" by the Imperial Japanese Army and educate future generations about these crimes; and

WHEREAS, The City of Chicago stands against human trafficking in all its forms; now therefore

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BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council, assembled this thirteenth day of November, 2013, do hereby recognize and support "comfort women" by acknowledging as historical fact the suffering they endured during their forced internment in Japanese military comfort stations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we urge all Chicago educators to share with students of an appropriate age the story of "comfort women" when discussing the history of Asia or World War II, or the issue of human trafficking; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we further commit to exploring ways to develop an Asian American social science and history curriculum for public schools that would provide one centralized structure for the shared history of events, such as the story of "comfort women" or the forced incarceration of Japanese-Americans during World War II, along with many other examples of Asian American experiences in the United States; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we reaffirm our commitment to ending all forms of violence and trafficking of women in the City of Chicago; and

Edward M. Burke, Alderman, 14 Ward

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be presented to the executive directors of the Korean American Resource & Cultural Center, Korean American Voter Organizing Initiative & Community Empowerment, Korean American Women in Need, the Japanese American Service Committee, the Cambodian Association of Illinois, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Chicago.