



Office of the City Clerk

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Legislation Text

File #: R2015-254, **Version:** 1

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Committee on Finance

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, on January 23, 2015, Illinois State Representatives Joe Sosnowski and John D. Anthony sponsored HB0263 which would reduce the number of days Illinois museums are open to residents without charge from 52 days per year to 26; and

WHEREAS, the Adler Planetarium, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago History Museum, DuSable Museum of African American History, Field Museum, Museum of Science and Industry, Museum of Contemporary Art, Shedd Aquarium, Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, National Museum of Mexican Art and National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture would all be affected by the proposed legislation; and

WHEREAS, prior to 1970, state law required that museums be open to the public without charge for three days each week and, to children in actual attendance of any school in the state, at all times; and

WHEREAS, at that time, museums were additionally prohibited from charging admission fees in excess of 25 cents for each visitor over 10 years of age and 10 cents for each visitor 10 years of age or under; and

WHEREAS, in 1970, state law was amended to lift the 10 and 25 cent limits on admission fees and reduce the mandated free days from three to one; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, state law was amended to restrict free days to Illinois residents; and

WHEREAS, state law currently requires Chicago's museums to be open to Illinois residents without charge for a period equivalent to 52 days, at least 6 of which must be during the period from June through August, each year; and

WHEREAS, since 1891, the City of Chicago, the South Park Commissioners, and the Chicago Park District have granted Chicago's museums permission to use and occupy public property on the condition that they offer free days to the public; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the City of Chicago subsidize Chicago's museums each year through the payment of property taxes; and

WHEREAS, over the past five years, the Chicago Park District has budgeted more than \$30 million annually to fund Chicago's museums; and

WHEREAS, admission fees generally account for less than 15 percent of the operating budgets of Chicago's museums; and

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago prides itself on offering its residents affordable access to world-class art and culture; and

WHEREAS, the Adler Planetarium, Art Institute of Chicago, and Museum of Science and Industry have raised admission fees in recent years; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago City Council seeks to ensure that all Chicago residents, including those on modest budgets, have the ability to access Chicago's world-class museums; NOW, THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Mayor and the members of the Chicago City Council, do hereby urge House Speaker J. Michael Madigan, Senate President John J. Cullerton, the Illinois General Assembly and Governor Bruce Rauner to oppose HB0263 and any reduction in the number of mandated free days at Chicago's museums; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Speaker Madigan, President Cullerton, the members of the Chicago delegation of the Illinois General Assembly and Governor Rauner.