



Office of the City Clerk

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

Legislation Text

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RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago is a home unit of government pursuant to the 1970 Illinois Constitution, Article VII, Section 6(a); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to its home rule power, the City of Chicago may exercise any power and perform any function relating to its government and affairs including the power to regulate for the protection of the public health, safety, morals, and welfare; and

WHEREAS, on July 13, 2017, the Chicago Tribune reported that blood banks serving the Chicago are at a critically low level not seen in several years, forcing at least one hospital to postpone surgeries; and

WHEREAS, blood donation shortages are a public health concern; and

WHEREAS, the American Red Cross of Chicago and Northern Illinois reported 700 fewer blood drives across the United States during the Independence Day holiday week than in the weeks before and after the holiday, leaving only a four day supply of blood on hand to serve the region; and

WHEREAS, reports from the American Red Cross state that the blood shortage in Chicago and Northern Illinois mirrors a nationwide drop in supply that has left it 61,000 donations short of what it has needed to keep up with demand for the past two months - the equivalent of the organization not seeing a single donation for more than four days; and

WHEAREAS, the American Red Cross of Chicago and Northern Illinois, reports that donor shortages this summer are particularly alarming; and

WHEREAS, both the Red Cross and America's Blood Centers (ABC), which together represent virtually all United States blood banks, reported severe shortages at a season when blood supplies are usually adequate; and

WHEREAS, both groups report that the reason for the shortage is increased demand, much of it due to the increased number of complex therapies such as chemotherapy, organ transplants, and heart surgeries, which require large amounts of blood and blood products; and

WHEREAS, the Chicago Tribune article quoted a spokesperson for LifeSource, a nonprofit blood center, as saying that the "problem is especially troubling because the supply helps to treat victims of violence in

Chicago," and that "[f]or Chicago, because trauma happens every day, the need for blood is constant;" and

WHEREAS, according to the American Red Cross, roughly one pint is given during a donation; and

WHEREAS, an average adult body holds about 10 to 12 pints of blood, one pint of blood is equivalent to 475 milliliters, less than the 525 milliliters needed to equal one unit of blood; and

WHEREAS, to exemplify blood unit needs, a heart surgery typically requires 6 units of blood, a burn victim typically requires 20 units of blood, a victim of a car accident typically requires at least 50 units of blood, and just one liver transplant can use 120 units of donated blood; and

WHEREAS, the American Red Cross needs approximately 80,000 units daily to properly supply hospitals and transfusion centers across the United States; and

WHEREAS, due to shortages it now only has about 36,000 units, a shortage of over 40,000 units per day; and

WHEREAS, the increase in demand far outpaces the increase in blood donations, with donations increasing annually by about 3% and demand growing at 6%; and

WHEREAS, the lack of supply has led medical staff at Rush University Medical Center to postpone some surgeries, particularly those for infants or children who need blood that has gone through a special optimization process to ensure safety, according to Mark Pool, Medical Director for the Blood Center at Rush; and

WHEREAS, Chicago experiences an unusually high number of traumas every day, therefore, the need for blood is constant and the City Council stands ready to seek viable solutions to resolve the blood donations shortage; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO: That the Members of this City Council call on the Department of Finance to appear before the Committee on Finance to address its efforts to include blood donation groups among those eligible for the city's Voluntary Charitable Payroll Deductions Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chicago Department of Public Health appear before the Committee on Finance to address current or potential efforts to combat the blood donation shortage.