



Office of the City Clerk

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

Legislation Text

File #: R2020-163, Version: 1

Committee on Public Safety

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A HEARING ON THE RISE IN POLICE DEATHS BY SUICIDE

WHEREAS, Police deaths by suicide have become more frequent and widespread, with the number on the rise in Chicago and police departments around the country; and

WHEREAS, Instances of Chicago police officers taking their own lives have increased in the past four years, and, in 2017, the suicide rate among Chicago police officers was 60% higher than the national law enforcement average; and

WHEREAS, The single greatest cause of death for law enforcement officers is suicide, which means that more police officers die by suicide than in the line-of-duty; and

WHEREAS, There were a record 228 police deaths by suicide in the United States in 2019, up from 172 the previous year; and

WHEREAS, Police officers are at a higher risk of suicide than any other profession, which researchers attribute to a combination of easy access to deadly weapons, intense stress, and the harrowing events that police officers are often exposed to; and

WHEREAS, Police officers, especially those in large cities like Chicago, face a great deal of trauma on a day-to-day basis and are often first on the scene to some of the most dangerous and demanding situations imaginable; and

WHEREAS, The exposure to life-threatening situations and the physical strain of working long hours can have a serious impact on the mental health of police officers; and

WHEREAS, The rates of PTSD and depression among police officers is five times higher than that of the civilian population; and

WHEREAS, Comparatively, the Behavior Science Services Unit of the Los Angeles Police Department has seen tremendous success in reducing police officer suicides in the past several years;

2015 2016 2017: 2018 2019
1 2 1 0
1; and

WHEREAS, Increased mental health outreach, education on emotional well-being, and training on suicide prevention can all work to reduce the number of police officers who die by suicide; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of Chicago assembled this nineteenth day of February, 2020, do hereby call upon the Committee on Public Safety to hold a hearing to discuss the rise in police suicides in the Chicago Police Department in the past four years and strategies for

suicide prevention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we call upon Chicago Police Interim Superintendent Charlie Beck or his designee, Commissioner of Public Health Allison Arwady, The Director of the Behavior Science Services Unit if the Los Angeles Police Department and any organizations focused on mental health and suicide prevention to be present at the hearing; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, We encourage anyone who is or knows someone who may be considering suicide to contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 (En Espanol: 1-888-628-9454; Deaf and Hard of Hearing: 1-800-799-4889) or the Crisis Text Line by texting 741741.

CHRISTOPHER TALIAFERRO Alderman, 29th Ward