



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Text

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**File #:** R2020-796, **Version:** 1

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### RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, With hearts full of best wishes for her future, mixed with regret to see her leave, the Members of this Chamber are pleased to congratulate Mary Joyce Gallagher, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Family and Support Services, on the occasion of her departure from the Department; and

WHEREAS, A native of Buffalo, New York, Ms. Gallagher worked as a newspaper reporter before relocating to Chicago. After her first marriage ended, she took on - with grace and dignity - the herculean task of being a single mother to ten children, ranging in age from 1 to 18. A multitasker by nature, who balanced the demands on her time with exceptional competence and grace, Ms. Gallagher began her career with the City of Chicago in June of 1989, when she was hired as Director of Planning of the former City Cable TV Commission. In November of 1990, Ms. Gallagher was named Cable Administrator, a position in which she worked tirelessly to create competition among cable providers and to produce a Consumer Bill of Rights, all to protect Chicago residents; and

WHEREAS, Impressed by Ms. Gallagher's energy, skill, dedication and work ethic, in July of 2003, Mayor Richard M. Daley appointed Ms. Gallagher as Commissioner of the Department on Aging. Motivated by her vision for the Department, which was "to involve the entire City in assisting the Department" to identify isolated senior citizens who needed help and services, such as meals, in-home services, health care, tax assistance or rides, Ms. Gallagher hit the ground running. Within days of her appointment, she formed a task force on aging to anticipate and meet the demands for service created by the City's rapidly aging Baby Boomer population, and she gained notoriety for pinning an "Accentuate The Positive" button on the lapel of almost everyone she met while personally visiting all of the Department's facilities in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Gallagher quickly adjusted from directing one of the City's smaller agencies to leading one of its largest departments. Her many job responsibilities included overseeing six senior centers, numerous satellite facilities, and more than 700 full-time and part-time employees, as well as conducting community-based outreach initiatives and administering State and Federal programs to help low-income senior citizens pay their bills and live with the dignity and respect they deserve; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Gallagher was instrumental in establishing Senior Save, a public-private partnership that enabled persons over age 60 to obtain a discount card for goods and services at participating businesses, and in enlisting the help of the Chicago Police Department's CAPS program, faith-based organizations and community groups to help seniors in need; and

WHEREAS, Throughout her many years of service, Ms. Gallagher served the residents of Chicago with fairness and dedication, and earned the admiration and respect of her clients and colleagues; and

WHEREAS, A woman with a strong record of community involvement, Ms. Gallagher served as the President of the Board of Directors at Mental Health America of Illinois and worked to get Alzheimer's and Dementia classified as mental illnesses; and

WHEREAS, In the evenings, Ms. Gallagher attended graduate classes at Loyola University, where she earned her Master's Degree in Chicago Studies. She also served as Executive Director of the Senior Services Area Agency on Aging and as head of the City's Advisory Council on Aging; and

WHEREAS, In January of 2009, in conjunction with the merger of the Department on Aging into the Department of Family and Support Services, Ms. Gallagher began another long and stellar chapter in her career as a Deputy Commissioner in that Department, where she was widely admired for her energy, creativity and devotion to helping those in need. Ms. Gallagher's dedication, energy, focus, optimism and team spirit will be sorely missed by her colleagues; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this seventh day of October, 2020, do hereby congratulate Mary Joyce Gallagher on the occasion of her departure from City service; express to her our heartfelt gratitude for her many years of exemplary service to the residents of our great City; and extend to her our best wishes for continued health, happiness, prosperity and success as she turns the page to a new chapter in her life; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Mary Joyce Gallagher as a sign of our appreciation and esteem.