



# Office of the City Clerk

City Hall  
121 N. LaSalle St.  
Room 107  
Chicago, IL 60602  
[www.chicityclerk.com](http://www.chicityclerk.com)

## Legislation Text

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OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI E. LIGHTFOOT  
MAYOR

January 26, 2022

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF  
THE CITY OF CHICAGO

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith a congratulatory resolution for Mark Kelly upon his retirement as  
Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events Commissioner.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Very truly yours^

### RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, In recognition of his leadership and appreciation for his service to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy, the Members of this Chamber are pleased to congratulate Mark Kelly, the former Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, on the occasion of his retirement; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Kelly was born and raised in Chicago. He received a bachelor's degree from John Carroll University and a master's degree from the University of Cincinnati; and

WHEREAS, For more than 30 years, Mr. Kelly served in numerous leadership roles at Columbia College, all while consistently supporting students who view the world through a creative lens in attaining a

world-class education that blends creative and media arts, liberal arts, and business; and

WHEREAS, Prior to becoming Commissioner, Mr. Kelly served as the Vice President for Student Affairs at Columbia College to foster and oversee an immersive arts experience for Columbia's burgeoning student body, across its 100 different degree programs; and

WHEREAS, Recognizing the significance of Mr. Kelly's lifelong career in arts education and development in Chicago, Mayor Rahm Emanuel appointed him as Commissioner of the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events in 2016, where he advanced Chicago's place as a cultural destination for artists and visitors around the world; and

WHEREAS, As Commissioner, Mr. Kelly addressed inequality in the arts by introducing several programs that prioritized the South and West Sides of Chicago, including Chicago Presents, the Artists Response Program, Culture in My Neighborhood and the Neighborhood Access Program; and

WHEREAS, In the wake of the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Kelly led the Department's efforts in supporting the City's artistic community. In partnership with the Mayor's Office, the Department launched a \$2.3 million relief fund to benefit members of the arts and entertainment industries who lost income during the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, During Mr. Kelly's tenure, the Department's funding for the arts increased tenfold, making Chicago one of the top major U.S. cities in government support for arts recovery and artist relief. In 2021, the City provided \$100 million in funds to support the arts landscape, including "Arts77," a recovery plan that leverages over \$60 million in initial funding to support local artists and creative industries, and as part of the 2022 budget, the City will make \$26 million in new arts and cultural investments; and

WHEREAS, Among his many career highlights, Mr. Kelly founded the Wabash Arts Corridor initiative, created the artistic vision for the Arts in the Dark Halloween Parade, received a Doctor of Arts, honoris causa, from Columbia College, was awarded the Beethoven Spirit Award, and was named one of the Fifty People Who Really Perform for Chicago in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Throughout his career, Mr. Kelly has served on many arts and cultural-centric boards, with active roles on the following: Choose Chicago Board of Directors; State Street Commission; Cliff Dwellers Club, Actors Fund's Central Region Advisory Council; Chicago Loop Alliance Wabash District Advisory Council; and Giordano Dance Chicago's Programming/Community Task Team; and

WHEREAS, In retirement, Mr. Kelly will continue his advocacy to recognize Chicago as one of the great cultural capitals of the world, work on perfecting his percussion, and enjoy much deserved quality time with his wife, Tricia, and their children Ty, Desmond, and Catherine; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, assembled this twenty-sixth day of January, 2022, do hereby congratulate Mark Kelly on the occasion of his retirement; express to him our heartfelt gratitude for his exemplary service to the residents of our great city; and extend to him our best wishes for continued health, happiness, prosperity, and success; and

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