



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ADVOCATES AND ALDERMEN,  
INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO FURTHER STRENGTHEN PROTECTIONS FOR  
IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES**

*Lightfoot administration will remove all exceptions from the original Welcoming City Ordinance and strengthen existing Chicago Police Department procedures*

**CHICAGO** – Following the years-long effort of advocates and aldermen to amend to the Welcoming City Ordinance, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today introduced an ordinance to officially codify current CPD procedures where officers are prohibited from cooperating or sharing information with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on civil immigration matters. This legislation reaffirms the commitments Mayor Lightfoot has made throughout her tenure to protect Chicago's more than 500,000 immigrants against threats of raids and deportation from the federal government.

“Since my days on the campaign, I have been clear that for the City to live up to its values on protecting residents, and to make Chicago a truly welcoming city for immigrants and refugees that have always been our foundation, we have to not only strengthen our Welcoming City Ordinance but eliminate any 'carve-outs' that prevent the ordinance from fully ensuring public safety,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “Over the past several months, the City along with the Latino Caucus and immigration advocates, have been assessing the legal considerations of removing these 'carve-outs.' With these proposed amendments, I look forward to further protecting the hundreds of thousands of immigrant and refugee families that make this city truly great.”

As currently drafted, the Welcoming City Ordinance excepts four classes of people from the prohibition on cooperating with ICE: individuals with an outstanding criminal warrant, individuals convicted of a felony, individuals presently serving as a defendant in a felony case, and individuals identified as a gang member. The legislation introduced today will remove the four classes of people that are currently exceptions from the prohibition on

cooperation with ICE, end exceptions to the sharing of immigration information with ICE unless required by lawful order, prevent CPD from participating in civil immigration enforcement, and make technical changes needed to strengthen the ordinance.

Today's proposed amendments were made possible thanks to the work of the Chicago Immigration Working Group, which includes the following advocacy organizations: Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Chicago, Access Living, AFIRE Chicago, Arab American Action Network, Brighton Park Neighborhood Council, HANA Center, Centro de Trabajadores Unidos, Enlace Chicago, Grassroots Collaborative, the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, Organized Communities Against Deportations, the National Immigrant Justice Center, Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America, Chicago Community and Workers' Rights, Chicago Jobs with Justice, the Latino Union of Chicago, the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, and Beyond Legal Aid.

"The approval of the amendments will allow me to feel safer to seek the supports and services I need as a person with a disability to live within my community, without the fear of being discriminated and criminalized because of my status and or background," said Jose Garcia, undocumented and member of Cambiando Vidas at Access Living

After more than a year of work between immigration advocates, and the Chicago City Council's Latino Caucus, the legislation will officially ensure all residents, citizens and noncitizens alike, have the right to due process. By limiting the access ICE has to Chicago residents' information, the City is protecting them from potentially unlawful detainment. While undocumented immigrants are known to be targeted by the federal government, there are many immigrants with other status in Chicago (student visas, specialty workers, cultural exchange) who could also be targeted by the federal government.

"The introduction of this amendment represents years of organizing and advocacy by, and for, undocumented Chicagoans. No one should be afraid to call 911. By creating a clear line between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement we are strengthening immigrant protections and building a safer Chicago," said Carlos Ramirez-Rosa, 35<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman.

Research shows that when jurisdictions limit cooperation with ICE and end civil immigration enforcement, communities are not only safer, but also thrive economically. For example, according to a [report](#) from the Center for American Progress, large central metro sanctuary counties have 65.4 fewer crimes per 10,000 people than their non-sanctuary counterparts. The same study concluded that other counties that participate in similar sanctuary initiatives experience lower poverty and unemployment rates, and higher household incomes.

"As someone who has worked on behalf of immigrants my entire career, I have never been more proud in our efforts to provide additional protections for our undocumented residents than I am today with the introduction of this ordinance," said Michael D. Rodriguez, 22<sup>nd</sup> Ward Alderman. "This country was founded as an oasis for immigrants and

refugees looking for a better life, and I am proud to be a part of a city that continues to share those values.”

Research also shows that the removal of the ‘carve-outs’ can strengthen relations between immigrant communities and law enforcement by encouraging immigrants to assist local law enforcement in reporting and investigating crimes without fear for themselves or family members of being targeted for deportation. For example, according to a [study](#) led by the Center for Growth and Opportunity, when law enforcement agencies make it clear that they do not cooperate with immigration, the domestic homicide rate for Latina women lowers by an astonishing 62%.

"Immigrant rights organizers have been fighting for the elimination of the four exceptions for years, this is the result of organized communities throughout Chicago that are demanding the end of criminalization of immigrants. With the elimination of the exceptions, my community and I feel safer but we must continue to advocate to end ICE collaboration with law enforcement and abolish other policies that criminalize communities of color in Chicago," said Antonio Gutierrez, undocumented Chicago resident and Strategic Coordinator for Organized Communities Against Deportations.

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