



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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**MAYOR EMANUEL TO SUPPORT AMENDED ORDINANCE REDUCING THE PENALTY
FOR POSSESSION OF SMALL AMOUNTS OF MARIJUANA**

*New Policy Could Free Up an Average of Four Officers per Arrest and Save Approximately \$1
Million;*

Savings will be Reinvested in Keeping Police Officers on the Streets

CHICAGO – Mayor Rahm Emanuel will join Alderman Danny Solis to introduce an amended ordinance that allows for tickets to be issued for low-level marijuana possession.

Under the proposed ordinance, police officers will have the discretion to issue a written violation for possession of 15 grams of marijuana or less. The ordinance is a modified version of the original ordinance introduced by Alderman Solis in 2011.

“When the ordinance was first introduced, I asked the Chicago Police Department to do a thorough analysis to determine if this reform balanced public safety and common-sense rules that save taxpayer dollars to reinvest in putting more officers on the street,” said Mayor Emanuel. “The result is an ordinance that allows us to observe the law, while reducing the processing time for minor possession of marijuana – ultimately freeing up police officers for the street.”

“I am pleased that Mayor Emanuel has taken this step to address this important issue. One of the most significant results of this ordinance is that it will allow our police officers to spend more time out policing our neighborhoods and less time processing minor offenses and filling out paperwork. Passing this ordinance will be a major victory in promoting safe



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neighborhoods and reducing crime," said Alderman Danny Solis.

Chicago Police Department statistics indicate that last year there were 18,298 arrests for possession of less than 10 grams of cannabis. Each case involves approximately four officers – two arresting and two transporting officers – and places an additional burden on the Cook County court and jail system.

"These arrests tied up more than 45,000 police hours," said Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy. "The new ordinance nearly cuts that time in half, which equals an approximate \$1 million in savings, while freeing up cops to address more serious crime."

Numerous states have reduced the penalty for possession of limited amounts of marijuana, including Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Oregon. Additional cities in Illinois that have similar policies include Champaign, Evanston and Normal.

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