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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2           WHEREAS, The Kenwood Oakland Community Organization,  
3 affectionately known as KOCO, was founded by community and  
4 religious leaders in 1965 and celebrates its 50th year of  
5 existence this year; and

6           WHEREAS, KOCO was incorporated 2 years later in 1967 and  
7 had as its first Executive Director the esteemed and  
8 internationally recognized Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.; and

9           WHEREAS, Rev. Curtis L. Burrell became KOCO's second  
10 Executive Director from 1967 to 1971 and, through partnerships  
11 with the Community Renewal Society and other community  
12 institutions, provided landmark employment and child care  
13 initiatives; and

14           WHEREAS, An organizer with the world-renowned Congress of  
15 Racial Equality (CORE), Robert L. Lucas, joined KOCO as its  
16 coordinator for leadership training in 1969; he became the  
17 Chairman of the Board of Directors in 1972 and then became its  
18 third Executive Director in 1975, serving in that capacity  
19 until 2000; and

20           WHEREAS, KOCO members organized to get the Martin Luther  
21 King, Jr. High School built in 1971 in order to replace the

1 overcrowded Forrestville High School; and

2 WHEREAS, KOCO members organized to get the Kenwood Oakland  
3 Medical, Limited (KOMED) health clinic opened in 1975, which  
4 later merged with the Holman health clinic in 1997, to provide  
5 quality health care to low-income and working families in the  
6 north Kenwood-Oakland community; and

7 WHEREAS, KOCO members organized to erect the Woodlake  
8 Village Townhomes in 1988 to provide affordable housing for  
9 more than 70 families on a parcel of land that had become an  
10 unsanctioned waste dump in the middle of the community; and

11 WHEREAS, The first African-American Mayor of Chicago,  
12 Harold Washington, broke ground at the site of what would  
13 become the Woodlake Village Townhomes in 1987 - the morning of  
14 the day he died in office; and

15 WHEREAS, KOCO members organized to create another 300 units  
16 of affordable housing in the north Kenwood-Oakland community to  
17 provide safe, decent, and quality housing for families in need;  
18 and

19 WHEREAS, KOCO members played a significant role in the work  
20 that led to the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988, which called  
21 for the creation of local school councils, and with it, 5

1 consecutive years of improved standardized test scores; and

2 WHEREAS, KOCO members led the call for balanced community  
3 development in north Kenwood-Oakland that did not result in  
4 displacing residents, which led to the creation of a shopping  
5 center and the designation of north Kenwood-Oakland as a  
6 community conservation area; and

7 WHEREAS, KOCO has a long and distinguished history of  
8 providing youth development programming - a summer day camp  
9 since 1992 and an afterschool program since 1995 - to serve  
10 low-income and working families who are unable to afford most  
11 comparable programs; and

12 WHEREAS, Jhatayn "Jay" Travis served as KOCO's fourth  
13 Executive Director from 2000 to 2012 and ushered in a  
14 renaissance of its community organizing activities -  
15 challenging slum lords and school-closing advocates and  
16 refocusing its attention on grassroots leadership development;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, KOCO was one of the first community-based  
19 organizations to certify parents and residents as local school  
20 council trainers and have since provided training for hundreds  
21 of local school council members throughout Chicago; and

1           WHEREAS, KOCO members organized to get a community benefits  
2 agreement signed to protect community residents from being  
3 displaced and added provisions to improve the community if  
4 Chicago won its bid for the 2016 Olympic Summer Games; and

5           WHEREAS, KOCO members led the charge in working with the  
6 Illinois General Assembly and the Office of the Governor to  
7 secure increased resources for summer youth employment  
8 throughout Illinois to offer a solution to the scourge of  
9 violence plaguing our communities; and

10           WHEREAS, KOCO members have traveled abroad, received  
11 international recognition, and hosted distinguished foreign  
12 guests in its service to the ideals of social justice; and

13           WHEREAS, KOCO has been honored throughout the years by the  
14 hard work of its community members and leaders to provide a  
15 litany of unnamed benefits and protections to some of the most  
16 vulnerable populations of people in the City of Chicago, the  
17 State of Illinois, and beyond; and

18           WHEREAS, KOCO is currently led by its fifth Executive  
19 Director, J. Brian Malone, and has maintained its use of  
20 community organizing as its primary methodology to create  
21 change for low-income and working families in the north  
22 Kenwood-Oakland community; therefore, be it

1           RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
2 NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we  
3 celebrate the 50th anniversary of the courageous leadership  
4 that led to the creation of the Kenwood Oakland Community  
5 Organization; and be it further

6           RESOLVED, That we honor the distinguished record of service  
7 that the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization has provided to  
8 low-income and working families throughout Illinois; and be it  
9 further

10           RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
11 presented to the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization as an  
12 expression of our esteem and respect.