

**Proposed Substitute for item #16-1065**

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

Sponsored by: JESÚS G. GARCÍA, and LUIS ARROYO JR, County Commissioners

**RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE DIGNIFIED TREATMENT OF CENTRAL AMERICAN ASYLUM SEEKERS**

**WHEREAS**, Cook County is a “Fair and Equal County for Immigrants,” as defined in 07-R-240; and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County is home to over one million immigrants with residents from Latin America, Asia, Europe and Africa; and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County has benefitted culturally, socially and economically from the diversity of its residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the Central American countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras have some of the world’s highest rates of violence, causing a refugee crisis; and

**WHEREAS**, Hundreds of thousands of Central Americans have been displaced by endemic violence, the majority of whom are women and children; and

**WHEREAS**, Violence against women and children is pervasive and the Central American governments have failed to protect their citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, The number of asylum applications from Central American countries to neighboring countries has increased thirteen fold since 2008; and

**WHEREAS**, Those who pursue asylum in the United States undergo a stringent process to demonstrate past persecution or a fear of future persecution on account of a protected ground; and

**WHEREAS**, Families and Children, most without access to legal counsel have received removal orders without having meaningful opportunities to explain their need for legal protection to an immigration judge; and

**WHEREAS**, Many of these families and children may be eligible for immigration reprieve if they are allowed to present their cases to the Board of Immigration Appeals; and

**WHEREAS**, There have been no fewer than 83 documented murders of individuals who were deported back to Central American countries from the United States since January 2014; and

**WHEREAS**, The United States suspended its Peace Corps operations in El Salvador in January 2016 “due to the ongoing security environment;” and

**WHEREAS**, The Honduran National Police Chief announced in January 2016 that he is leaving the country due to death threats by both police and criminal gangs; and

**WHEREAS**, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) began conducting raids during the 2016 New Year's holiday targeting Central American families fleeing violence and children as young as four-years-old; and

**WHEREAS**, Central American asylum seekers should be treated with the dignity, care and compassion that every person deserves; and

**WHEREAS**, immigration raids perpetuate pervasive fear within Cook County, sow distrust of local law enforcement and raise concerns regarding civil rights violations; and

**WHEREAS**, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) recent raids threaten the health of the immigrant community and all Cook County residents by creating an atmosphere of fear and distrust of governmental authority; and

**WHEREAS**, These raids violate basic human rights and threaten the health of all Cook County Residents in addition to immigrant communities by disrupting clinical, public health and public safety services as recognized by the American Public Health Association; and

**WHEREAS**, ICE raids create unnecessary stress and trauma and re-enforce a policy of structural racism that isolates immigrants; and

**WHEREAS**, Cook County Ordinance 11-O-73 sets out a policy outlining the proper boundaries of the relationship between Cook County personnel and officials and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board Of Commissioners hereby reaffirm its commitment to remain a safe place for residents of Cook County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners hereby reaffirms its commitment to Cook County Ordinance 11-O-73; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners hereby denounces such raids and urges local law enforcement not to participate, cooperate, or otherwise facilitate such raids in the county and to abide by existing laws governing interaction with ICE including Cook County Ordinance 11-O-73; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Commissioners hereby urge President Barack Obama to designate El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), recognizing that people should not be deported back to these countries given current conditions.