



HR0259

LRB104 13121 LAW 25225 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of Representatives wish to congratulate Rosa Escareno on the occasion of her retirement as general superintendent and CEO of the Chicago Park District in February 2025; and

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WHEREAS, Rosa Escareno, a lifelong public servant who worked under five Chicago mayors, is considered a reformer and strategist, leading large-scale agency reforms that support families, strengthen communities, promote economic growth, build income equity, and encourage business opportunities; and

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WHEREAS, Rosa Escareno started her lifelong career in public service under Mayor Eugene Sawyer before becoming a budget analyst for the City of Chicago under Mayor Richard M. Daley in 1998, where she conducted program oversight, budgetary analysis, and contract review for nearly \$300 million in local, state, and federal grant funds for three years; she then worked as deputy press secretary for three years before running community affairs and media for the City of Chicago Fire Department; she was selected by Mayor Daley as deputy director for the City of Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection in August 2005; after three years, she was promoted to deputy commissioner; she then returned to the Mayor's Office to assist the communications

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1 team as deputy press secretary; and

2 WHEREAS, Rosa Escareno was promoted to deputy chief
3 operating officer when Mayor Rahm Emanuel entered office in
4 2011; she oversaw day-to-day operations for several government
5 agencies, including the Department of Business Affairs and
6 Consumer Protection, the Department of Planning and
7 Development, the Chicago Department of Buildings, the Chicago
8 Department of Public Health, the Chicago Department of Family
9 and Support Services, the Chicago Public Library, the Mayor's
10 Office for People with Disabilities, and the Chicago Animal
11 Care and Control; she was entrusted with overseeing these
12 agencies' fiscal budgets, operations, and performance
13 management, and she was responsible for a nearly \$1 billion
14 budget and 2,500 employees; she spearheaded operational
15 efficiencies across city agencies, maximizing resource
16 allocation and advancing the administration's priorities,
17 leading to more efficient and solid government practices; and

18 WHEREAS, Rosa Escareno was appointed as commissioner for
19 the City of Chicago Department of Business Affairs and
20 Consumer Protection by Mayor Emanuel in 2017; for seven years,
21 she successfully regulated 60,000 businesses in Chicago,
22 including restaurants, bars and taverns, and hotels, and her
23 work included studying general business practices and new
24 emerging economies and markets; she provided oversight of

1 120,000 public vehicle and chauffeur licenses, including
2 ride-shares, taxis, charters, and liveries, and conducted
3 20,000 business investigations; she steered city policy,
4 regulatory structure and operations of essential business
5 industries, including hospitality and retail, ride-sharing,
6 and short-term rentals or "house-share" platforms; under her
7 leadership, the department modernized Chicago's marketplace by
8 embracing growth of emerging economies, such as launching
9 Chicago's first electric scooter program, implementing
10 shared-housing reforms to improve community safety, enhancing
11 industry accountability, establishing a transparency
12 requirement for third-party food servicers' food apps to
13 protect consumers, and leveling the playing field for all
14 businesses by bringing app-based practices into compliance;
15 she stepped down as commissioner in July 2021; and

16 WHEREAS, Rosa Escareno initially joined the Chicago Park
17 District, having been selected by Mayor Lori Lightfoot, as its
18 interim head in October 2021, becoming the park district's
19 permanent head in May 2022; as the general superintendent and
20 CEO of the Chicago Park District, she managed one of the
21 largest park systems in the country, a nearly \$600 million
22 system that includes close to 9,000 acres of parkland, more
23 than 600 parks, 26 miles of lakefront, 11 museums, eight golf
24 courses, seven harbors, two world-class conservatories, and a
25 sports stadium; she oversaw a team of 6,000 year-round, in

1 addition to seasonal workers, providing direct services to
2 nearly 400,000 residents; and

3 WHEREAS, During her three-year tenure, Rosa Escareno led
4 the Chicago Park District through transformational changes,
5 building a stronger park district while solidifying trust,
6 community well-being, and economic vibrancy; she launched a
7 new strategic plan, strengthened sustainable efforts, set
8 strong hiring practices prioritizing youth, and established
9 new health and wellness policies to improve lives; she led a
10 \$500 million economic development portfolio, building new park
11 amenities and maximizing connectivity and technology in all
12 communities to support families, Chicagoans, and visitors who
13 rely on recreational programs and special events; as
14 superintendent, she created the Office of Prevention and
15 Accountability to ensure allegations of wrongdoing were and
16 continue to be properly investigated and to ensure employees
17 were protected, bargaining new agreements with labor partners
18 in the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and Trades
19 Coalition; her department also made notable investments in
20 Chicago's youth by establishing operational stability to hire
21 for and revitalize after-school recreational programs, summer
22 day camps, senior programs, and recreational and sport leagues
23 across more than 600 parks and 250 field houses, bringing
24 operations to pre-pandemic levels; additionally, under her
25 direction, hourly wages were increased from \$17.00 to \$19.75

1 for thousands of seasonal and summer workers, of whom nearly
2 80% are young people between the ages of 16 and 24; and

3 WHEREAS, Rosa Escareno, as superintendent, created the
4 Office of Prevention and Accountability to ensure allegations
5 of wrongdoing were and continue to be properly investigated
6 and to ensure employees were protected, bargaining new
7 agreements with labor partners in the Service Employees
8 International Union (SEIU) and Trades Coalition; her
9 department also made notable investments in Chicago's youth by
10 establishing operational stability to hire for and revitalize
11 after-school recreational programs, summer day camps, senior
12 programs, and recreational and sport leagues across more than
13 600 parks and 250 field houses, bringing operations to
14 pre-pandemic levels; additionally, under her direction, hourly
15 wages were increased from \$17.00 to \$19.75 for thousands of
16 seasonal and summer workers, of whom nearly 80% are young
17 people between the ages of 16 and 24; and

18 WHEREAS, Rosa Escareno, born in Zacatecas, Mexico, holds a
19 Master of Science in Communications from Northwestern
20 University and a Bachelor of Arts from Loyola University
21 Chicago; she currently resides on Chicago's Northwest Side,
22 and she is the mother of one son, Mikey; therefore, be it

23 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE

1 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
2 we congratulate Rosa Escareno on her retirement as general
3 superintendent and CEO of the Chicago Park District, and we
4 thank her for her dedication to the residents of the City of
5 Chicago over the course of her 31-year career in public
6 service; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
8 presented to Rosa Escareno as an expression of our esteem and
9 respect.