



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 27, 2012

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL COMMENDS CITY COUNCIL FOR PASSING MARIJUANA ORDINANCE
Policy will Free Police Officers to Better Focus their Time and Efforts on Crime Prevention

CHICAGO - Mayor Rahm Emanuel commended the Chicago City Council today for passing Alderman Solis and Alderman Brookins' ordinance that allows police to issue tickets for low-level marijuana possession.

"I commend the City Council for passing this ordinance that will hold people accountable while freeing up police officers to focus their time and efforts on crime prevention," said Mayor Emanuel. "I know this was a difficult decision – as it was for me – but after studying the facts, the Council reached the same conclusion that I did: we cannot afford to take our officers off the streets for hours at a time only to see over 80 percent of the marijuana cases dismissed in court. This will keep our officers on the streets protecting our neighborhoods and finally hold people accountable for breaking the law."

Under the ordinance, police officers could issue a written notice of violation for possession of 15 grams of marijuana or less. Police officers will, however, continue to arrest anyone in possession of any amount of marijuana on a school or park district facility.

The fine would range between \$250 and \$500 based on the number of offenses on a person's record. The maximum fine would be assessed if an individual receives a second citation in a 30-day period.

"I am grateful to my colleagues as well as Mayor Emanuel for recognizing the benefits this ordinance can have on the lives of the people of Chicago, particularly in minority communities," said Alderman Danny Solis. "Most importantly, I am looking forward to seeing the positive changes that can be made by returning police officers to the streets for thousands of hours each year and how that can work to deter crime and violence in our neighborhoods."



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

"The simple truth is that the decades-long policies that we have had toward possession of small amounts of marijuana have failed to do anything other than fill our jails with nonviolent offenders. We want police to be in our neighborhoods fighting serious crime and violence," said Ald. Howard Brookins.

Officers will begin issuing tickets only after they have undergone field-test training that includes recognition of marijuana, how to use a test kit, how to write up a charge, and identification of packaging for sale.

Some of the revenue from these tickets will be reinvested in drug education and substance-abuse prevention.

The ordinance takes effect Saturday, August 4, 2012.

###