



## COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS CITY OF CHICAGO

**STATEMENT BY MONA NORIEGA, CHAIR AND COMMISSIONER  
CHICAGO COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS  
TO THE CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RELATIONS  
ON “RESTRICTING NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL TO THE STATE OF NORTH  
CAROLINA” AND THE “PROHIBITION ON PARTICIPATION IN REGISTRY  
PROGRAMS” ORDINANCE  
JUNE 12, 2017**

Good Morning Chairman Dowell and members of the Human Relations Committee. My name is Mona Noriega, and I serve as the Chair and Commissioner of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations (CCHR). As you know, the Commission is the civil rights agency for the City of Chicago. We enforce the Chicago Human Rights and Fair Housing Ordinances and its protections against discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, credit and bonding. We investigate and adjudicate complaints of discrimination based on 16 protected classes such as race, ancestry, national origin, and religion. The Commission also assists victims of hate crimes, mediates community tensions, and delivers educational workshops on a variety of human relations topics including bullying, prejudice reduction, and conflict resolution.

I am here today to voice my support for two items before you; 1) a resolution reaffirming the City of Chicago’s commitment to restrict non-essential City-funded employee travel to the State of North Carolina and 2) support for the Prohibition on Participation in Registry Programs Ordinance.

In regards to the first, we applaud the mayor, for again, affirming the City of Chicago as a welcoming city. In asserting the demand for civil rights protections for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals and restricting all non-essential City-funded or other travel by an employee representing the City of Chicago to the State of North Carolina which continues to prohibit local municipalities from enacting local anti-discrimination measures, the mayor continues to show his leadership on this important issue. In regards to the second item, an ordinance amendment, I am also here to support the Mayor's statement that we as the City of Chicago will not engage in creating or developing any sort of list or registry of our residents which might then be used to discriminate based on the demographic information associated with such a list including race, religion, or national origin, ancestry or other category. Registries maintained by the city could be subject to subpoenas and Freedom of Information Act Requests (FOIA). Thus access to these records could be the basis for the city unwittingly being involved in activities contrary to its core beliefs.

Speaking on behalf of the proposed ordinance, we know all too well from history that registries of different types have been used to single out people for internment, torture, and even death. In Nazi Germany, Hitler used such lists to slaughter six million Jews.<sup>1</sup> And here in the United States during WWII, our own government used registries to confine Germans, Italians, but most notably over 120,000 Japanese Americans to internment camps.<sup>2</sup> Following September 11, 2001, the Patriot Act was enacted creating new mechanisms to develop registries of primarily Arabs and Muslims resulting in the detaining and deportment of

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi\\_concentration\\_camps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_concentration_camps)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.businessinsider.com/5-surprises-about-american-internment-during-world-war-ii-2015-1>

thousands in the guise of protecting America from terrorism. The National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) was one of the most contentious of these policies which required more than 80,000 people from 25 listed countries, 24 of which had majority Muslim or Arab populations, to provide fingerprints and a photograph and periodically present themselves for in-person interviews with Department of Homeland Security officers. About 14,000 of those individuals were placed into deportation proceedings. Yet not a single individual was found to have any links to terrorist or violent activities.<sup>3</sup> And just as recently as the last election, our current president campaigned on a platform which included instituting a ban against Muslims from entering the country which he has since instituted, although it has been found unconstitutional by the courts thus far.

The mayor recognizes the danger of registries and in creating this ordinance has taken an affirmative stand to stop them in Chicago before they get started. This is consistent with his resolve that Chicago is and will remain a sanctuary city. We will not turn our backs on any of our residents, regardless of their immigration status. It also reflects the idea behind the newly created One Chicago campaign that drives home the point through video, print, and social media that although as Chicagoans we come from all parts of the globe, in Chicago we are one. We will support each other's rights to live free from discrimination, hate and bigotry. Registries don't provide freedom, they limit freedom. That's why it's imperative that this ordinance become law in Chicago.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/dec/22/nseers-arab-muslim-tracking-system-dismantled-obama>

In closing, we thank Chairman Dowell and the Human Relations Committee for holding this hearing on a very important and timely ordinance. Working together, we can take a strong stand against bigotry and hate and show the rest of the world that in Chicago we are one. Thank you.