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**CITY COUNCIL APPROVES EXPANDED PROTECTIONS
AGAINST DISCRIMINATION OF VETERANS AND ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY PERSONNEL**

The Chicago City Council today approved amendments to the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance (CHRO) and the Fair Housing Ordinance (CFHO) to provide protection for veterans and active duty military personnel from discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, credit, and bonding. The amendment creates a new protected class under the ordinances for "military status," which also includes reservists and members of the National Guard. Both anti-discrimination ordinances are enforced by the city's Commission on Human Relations (CCHR). Previously, the ordinances were limited to prohibiting discrimination based on military discharge status. The new class of military status will include military discharge status in its coverage. A second amendment approved today strengthens the Chicago Fair Housing Ordinance by providing protection to victims of discrimination against retaliatory action for filing a claim of housing discrimination. Prior to the amendment, retaliation was only included in the Chicago Human Rights Ordinance.

"The Commission on Human Relations has been at the forefront of protecting victims of discrimination for many years," said Mayor Emanuel. "These new protections will provide the agency with additional tools to combat discrimination, and help improve the quality of life for Chicagoans, and particularly our veterans."

The CCHR received valuable information and consistent input from the Mayor's Advisory Council on Veterans in recent years to help demonstrate the need for adding military status as a protected class under the ordinances. CCHR Chair and Commissioner Mona Noriega explained, "We have heard directly from the veterans' community through the advisory council that more and more veterans are experiencing discrimination, particularly in employment and housing in ways that speak to the challenges of today's military."

Advisory Council members report that some returning service men and women are encountering discrimination by employers who are concerned that they may be impacted by Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which could affect their attendance, and view them as potential security risks. Similarly council members shared that some employers are reluctant to hire reservists and members of the National Guard for fear that the employee may be deployed for indefinite periods of time. They also noted that veterans sometimes face harassment on the job in the form of derogatory remarks from other employees whose job duties may change to accommodate the reemployment of

a returning service member or who may have to assume additional job duties when an active duty military employee is on deployment.

In housing, the advisory council reported increased discrimination by landlords who have similar concerns about veteran applicants being impacted by PTSD. Other issues reported include landlords rejecting members of the reserves concerned about possible deployment of the tenant and how that will impact rent payments, and other landlords and management companies who will not accept GI Bill housing funds as a suitable source of income during the application process. And lastly, council members reported that veterans and members of the military are sometimes rejected for apartments because of the landlord's political beliefs and objection to US military involvement.

"We are excited to have the opportunity to expand our protections into these new areas through this important initiative," said Commissioner Noriega. We believe it is essential that all Chicagoans live free from discrimination, and by adding these additional amendments many people will no longer have to suffer silently when faced with discrimination."

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