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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES NEW COVID-19 RECOVERY TASKFORCE COMPRISED OF INDUSTRY EXPERTS, COMMUNITY LEADERS AND REGIONAL PARTNERS**

*Taskforce co-chaired by Mayor Lightfoot and former White House Chief of Staff Samuel K. Skinner to advise City's recovery efforts to rebuild and come back stronger post-COVID-19*

CHICAGO—Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced the creation of the COVID-19 Recovery Taskforce to advise city government as economic recovery planning efforts get underway in the wake of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The Taskforce will be co-chaired by Mayor Lightfoot and former White House Chief of Staff Sam Skinner and led by a group of industry experts, regional government leaders, community-based partners and policymakers. Together these leaders will provide critical insights to help Mayor Lightfoot as her administration works to balance a robust health response with a strategic economic response that addresses the unique challenges presented by COVID-19.

“COVID-19 is more than just a health crisis; its impact on our local economy has cost the livelihoods of thousands of Chicagoans and has imposed tremendous hardships across the social and economic fabric of all our communities,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “While the City continues to prioritize its public health response in order to keep our residents safe and healthy from this disease, we are also looking ahead to the next phase of this challenge to develop ways Chicago can emerge from the unprecedented event stronger than before. I commend the members of this new Taskforce for stepping up and serving their city as we lay the groundwork for Chicago's rebirth over the coming weeks and months ahead.”

Samuel K. Skinner, former White House Chief of Staff and U.S. Transportation Secretary, has served as the point person for numerous emergencies and crises, including natural disasters such as Hurricane Hugo and the 1989 San Francisco earthquake, as well as the 1988 terrorist bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. A native Chicagoan, Skinner has extensive experience working with corporations and businesses in the Chicago area, including roles as President of Commonwealth Edison, Chair of the Regional Transportation Authority, and as U.S. Attorney in the Northern District of Illinois. Skinner is currently Of Counsel at the law firm of Greenberg Traurig, LLP.

“I am honored to be co-chairing this Taskforce alongside Mayor Lightfoot,” said Skinner. “In crises, it is essential for different levels of government, different industries, and different communities to work together as we embark on the most ambitious recovery project Chicago has ever seen, one rooted in equity and inclusion.”



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The Taskforce is comprised of Chicago-based policy makers and leaders with experience in key issue areas which have already started to see demonstrable effects from COVID-19. Five working groups will offer policy recommendations and plans to the Lightfoot administration. In recognition of the fact that Chicago's economy is interconnected with that of the region as well as the state, these subgroups will also include participants representing the Chicagoland regional economy. The working group co-chairs include:

**Policy & Economic Stimulus**

- Roberto Herencia, Chairman, Byline Bank
- Melody Hobson, Co-CEO, Ariel Investments
- Bob Reiter, President, Chicago Federation of Labor
- Jenny Scanlon, CEO, UL

**Mental & Emotional Health**

- Evelyn Diaz, President, Heartland Alliance
- Karen Freeman Wilson, President & CEO, Urban League of Chicago
- Alexa James, Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Chicago

**Marketing and Business Development**

- Sandra Cordova Micek, CEO, WTTW | WFMT
- Richard Edelman, CEO, Edelman
- Anton Seals, Executive Director, Grow Greater Englewood

**Regional Coordination**

- Daniel Cronin, Board Chairman, DuPage County
- Toni Preckwinkle, Board President, Cook County
- Joseph T. Tamburino, Mayor, Village of Hillside

**Economic Change Study**

- Ben Harris, Executive Director, Kellogg Public-Private Initiative at Northwestern University
- Ai-Jen Poo, Co-Founder, National Domestic Worker's Alliance

"I am proud to work with Mayor Lightfoot and my fellow leaders to address the issues confronting us – including prioritizing the devastating impact this virus has had on our most vulnerable populations, especially in black and brown communities, as well as businesses throughout our region," Preckwinkle said. "Cook County has had a long track record of working closely with the City and collar county officials to lay the foundation for a regional economic approach in how government leads and the formation of the Recovery Taskforce is yet another example of local government collaboration to deliver comprehensive solutions during this turbulent time."

Under the leadership of the co-chairs, each Taskforce working group will include members from across industry, community-based organizations, organized labor, academia, and government. In addition to including regional elected officials, the Taskforce will also include several members of the Chicago City Council. Engagement of regional officials will



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be led by 36<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Gilbert Villegas, City Council Floor Leader and Chair of the Committee on Economic, Capital, and Technology Development.

“Every corner of Chicago has been adversely impacted by COVID-19 in one way or another, which is why we must bring all of our residents along on this recovery mission,” said 36<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman Gilbert Villegas. “The more prepared we can be to recover from COVID-19, the better for the health and wellbeing of every Chicagoan.”

The Taskforce will address the following priority recovery areas over the next several weeks. First, before the City can emerge from sheltering in place, it will need a plan to allow its residents to cope with grief, fear and loss. The COVID-19 crisis has cut across every industry, every community and is pervasive throughout our everyday life, with a disproportionate impact on African American residents, who account for more than half of COVID-19 deaths. One of the highest priorities is helping unite Chicagoans during this unprecedented time and building opportunities to grieve as well as cope with the loss of first responders, front line workers and loved ones from COVID-19.

Second, the Taskforce will address COVID-created unemployment. Since the crisis began, a staggering 17 million Americans have filed for unemployment, with more than 247,000 unemployment insurance claims filed in the Chicagoland region during the month of March alone.

Chicago’s economic recovery must also reaffirm Chicago as a destination for businesses, workers, tourism and events. Helping Chicago tell its story of what happened, where we have been, and what we will be in a post-COVID-19 world as we recover will be the work of the Marketing and Business Development working group.

Additionally, the health of the Chicago economy is directly tied to the broader Chicagoland area and State of Illinois. By engaging regional partners and policymakers, the Taskforce will ensure recovery efforts are aligned across multiple jurisdictions.

Finally, for the City to fully understand the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on workers, industry as well as the broader economy, the Taskforce will conduct a “change study” to gauge the full extent of economic hardship and provide a baseline for the city as well as the business community. This study will be crucial as the City works to develop a refined COVID-19 economic response plan, and to help prioritize growth in key industry sectors that have either seen significant losses, or which hold potential for workforce growth in a post COVID-19 economy.

The City’s COVID-19 recovery efforts will be grounded in the crucial work the Lightfoot administration is already doing with initiatives like its \$750M INVEST South/West program and the Solutions Toward Ending Poverty (STEP) agenda to address the structural economic forces that put millions of Chicago residents in economic hardship prior to the pandemic. Even as the task force conducts its work, the Lightfoot administration will continue to ensure economic relief is available for individuals and businesses hit hardest by COVID-19. This includes initiatives like the Chicago Small Business Resiliency Fund where



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the City is working to deploy \$100 million in immediate assistance for small business owners and entrepreneurs. Similarly, the Housing Assistance Grant Program has allocated 2,000 grants for low-income renters and homeowners working to make ends meet.

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