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**CITY COUNCIL APPROVES ORDINANCE TO INCREASE FINES FOR GRAFFITI AS PART OF
COMPREHENSIVE EFFORTS TO COMBAT VANDALISM CITYWIDE**

2014 Budget Includes an Additional Million Dollars in Crews and Equipment

City Council today approved an amendment introduced by Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Alderman Michael Zalewski and numerous other alderman to the Municipal Code of Chicago to increase fines and penalties for graffiti vandals to complement the \$1 million in additional resources in the 2014 budget for graffiti removal to ensure quick and efficient removal of graffiti citywide.

"Graffiti is vandalism that impacts the beauty and vitality of our neighborhoods," said Mayor Emanuel. "By increasing fines, we are working to deter future vandalism. We are also increasing our removal efforts to lessen the impact this vandalism has on our communities."

This ordinance adds weight to other efforts that we have put in place as a city to deter graffiti vandalism. We've been forced to send crews out to the same spot, week after week and it is my hope that these stiffer fines will make vandals think twice before propagating this problem.

The approved amendment increases vandalism fines from \$750 to no less than \$1,500 and no more than \$2,500 for each graffiti offense. The amendment also increase fines for any person caught vandalizing public property from no less than \$500 and no more than \$1,000. Fines for vandalism have remained unchanged for nearly a decade.

In the 2014 budget, Mayor Emanuel added nearly a million dollars in additional resources to the City's Graffiti Removal Program to help keep Chicago neighborhoods clean. The investments include two additional blasting crews, an additional painting crew and two additional chemical graffiti removal trucks to bring the fleet total to four chemical trucks. The Department of Streets and Sanitation (DSS) recently started a weekend shift for graffiti removal with one crew working Saturdays and Sundays to address emergency graffiti removal requests received over the weekend and other outstanding requests.

“The additional graffiti removal resources on top of the strategic ward-based grid removal system enables our crews to complete more work each day and ensures we are continuing to make smarter use of our resources to keep our neighborhoods clean,” said Charles Williams, Commissioner of DSS.

The City’s Graffiti Removal Program continues to utilize the strategic ward-based grid system to ‘blitz’ four wards per day addressing outstanding calls in targeted geographic areas. Each ward is blitzed approximately once every 10 days. The grid graffiti removal system was implemented in February 2012 by Mayor Emanuel and continues to demonstrate marked improvements in crew efficiency and productivity. Graffiti removal crews now average 17 percent more markings removed per day per crew under the grid than with old system of graffiti removal.

To see graffiti removal crews in action watch a video on the City’s Graffiti Removal Program [HERE](#). Graffiti removal is a free service offered by the City of Chicago. The graffiti program work with aldermen, community groups, block clubs, chambers of commerce and residents to respond to reports of graffiti. Residents who would like to report graffiti can call 311, or visit www.cityofchicago.org/dss.

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