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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES NEW PACKAGE OF CITY COUNCIL ETHICS REFORMS

Ethics reform package to bring increased transparency and oversight to the City Council

CHICAGO—Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today introduced a new package of ethics reforms to the City Council that will increase ethics requirements for members of the City Council and bring greater transparency to the city's legislative and policymaking processes. The proposed changes include restrictions to outside Aldermanic employment, expanded City Council oversight by the Office of the Inspector General and increased fines for ethics violations.

“As public servants, each and every one of us has a duty to operate within the highest of ethical standards as we represent the people of this City,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “This latest ethics reform package is designed to ensure that the City Council, just like every other function of our city government, operates under appropriate oversight, and that all decision-making is done with the highest level of transparency and in the best interest of taxpayers.”

If passed by City Council, the ethics reforms proposed today will amend the City's Ethics Code to ensure elected officials and employees of the City Council operates under the same oversight as all city government employees and elected officials.

These changes include:

- **Restricted outside employment:** Aldermen will be banned from certain outside employment that poses a potential conflict of interest with the City of Chicago.
- **Expanded Inspector General oversight:** To ensure consistency across city government, Aldermen would be subject to the same oversight as city employees. The Office of the Inspector General (OIG) would also have the authority to audit council administrative procedures.
- **Increased fines for ethics violations:** The reforms would raise fines for Ethics Ordinance violations from \$500 to \$1,000 for low-level violations, and \$2,000 to \$5,000 for high-level violations.



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- Broadened definition of lobbyists: This proposal expands the definition of lobbyists to include non-profits that lobby the city. Non-profit lobbyists would be required to register and provide quarterly reports, but their registration fees will be waived. This proposal does not pertain to unpaid volunteers.

Today's proposed reforms reflect a broad range of input and ideas by the City Council, the transition team and the Board of Ethics. This includes proposals that have been made in recent years but that have not been implemented, including expanded OIG oversight for the City Council.

"The Ethics Reforms introduced today will increase transparency and oversight of all programs, committees, and members of the City Council in order to hold our elected officials to the same high standards we hold city employees," said Chair of the Ethics Committee and 43rd Ward Alderman Michele Smith. "I am proud to join Mayor Lightfoot in championing these reforms that will make our government more open and accessible for the residents of Chicago."

The ethics reform package announced today is just the latest example of Mayor Lightfoot's commitment to creating new policies within her first 100 days in office that will strengthen ethics, transparency and accountability throughout city government. In recent days, Mayor Lightfoot has signed an executive order to end aldermanic prerogative as it relates to influencing departmental services and worked with City Council to strengthen transparency in City Council rules and procedures.

In the coming months, the new administration will also seek to work with the City Council to bring forward new legislation that increases transparency in City zoning processes.

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