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CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT RELEASED FROM SHAKMAN DECREE ENDING 46-YEAR LAWSUIT

Park District Found To Be in Substantial Compliance of Hiring Practices

After a public hearing in federal court today, Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced that the Chicago Park District has been dismissed from the Shakman lawsuit in its entirety and released from the consent decree related to Park District hiring and other employment actions. The court's ruling was made after the Park District made changes in its policies, procedures and culture to achieve substantial compliance with the consent decree.

"Today, we close the book on the past practice of putting political clout ahead of merit when hiring for jobs with the city and city agencies," said Mayor Emanuel. "With today's action, we've proven once and for all that it's about what you know, not who you know."

The Chicago Park District's ability to comply voluntarily without the oversight of a federal monitor saved taxpayers millions of dollars. The District implemented an employment plan to prevent political hiring that includes procedures to ensure compliance and to identify instances of noncompliance, such as employee training on unlawful political hiring, the reporting of political contacts and reporting of unlawful political discrimination. The employment plan also includes a "tip-line" for anonymous reporting of information. Going forward, the Chicago Park District Inspector General's Office is authorized to investigate, monitor and audit adherence to the employment plan, ensuring the Park District continues on its path of hiring compliance.

"The Chicago Park District has self-policed, and worked diligently to promote fair and transparent hiring practices that are free from unlawful political influence," said Michael Kelly, Park District Superintendent and CEO. "We are pleased that this court has recognized these efforts and dismissed the Shakman lawsuit."

In June of 2014, the city of Chicago was dismissed from the Shakman lawsuit in its entirety and released from the oversight of the Federal Hiring Monitor. With today's ruling, the city is completely free of the Shakman decree.

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