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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES TASK FORCE ON REMOVING BARRIERS TO
EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

*Task Force Will Focus on Cutting Red Tape to Support Businesses in Every Neighborhood;
New Reforms Proposed to Streamline Process for Signs in Public Ways*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today launched the Chicago Task Force on Removing Barriers to Employment and Entrepreneurship, which will provide the City Council with recommendations for cutting red tape that too often gets in the way of job and business opportunities.

“The foundation for a stronger future starts with clearing a path for Chicagoans to succeed today,” said Mayor Emanuel. “This task force is another way we are making City Hall a partner and no longer a problem to the residents and businesses of the City of Chicago. From gaining employment to starting and maintaining a business, this latest step is to ensure every Chicagoan can thrive.”

The task force will focus on three key priorities. First, it will analyze the process for starting a business and applying for a City job, working to identify any roadblocks to opportunity in the application process. This review will include an assessment of the value of fingerprint background checks as a security measure as compared to its impact on job opportunities. Second, it will review the inspection and permitting process to identify opportunities to streamline the experience for individuals and businesses that interact with the City. Lastly, the task force will analyze existing business licenses and develop recommendations for improving the ease of doing business in Chicago.

The Task Force will be co-chaired by Deputy Mayor and Chief Neighborhood Development Officer Andrea Zopp and Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) Commissioner Maria Guerra Lapacek. Its members will include Aids. Anthony Beale (9th), Emma Mitts (37th) and Patrick O'Connor (40th).

“This task force represents another prime example of how the City Council and Mayor Emanuel are working together to build a more welcoming environment, and to cut red tape

for neighborhood businesses, both in the 37th Ward, which I represent and throughout Chicago,” said Ald. Mitts, who serves as Chairman of the City Council’s Licensing Committee.

“By cutting red tape in Chicago we can help our neighborhood businesses focus growing their businesses and creating jobs instead of dealing with any unnecessary and burdensome regulations,” said Ald. O’Connor.

Mayor Emanuel today also announced new reforms that will streamline the process to issue public way use sign permits in Chicago. The reforms will cut the number of days to issue these permits by up to 80 percent and were developed in partnership with Aids. Mitts and Beale, the Chicago Small Business Advocacy Council and a coalition of business groups.

The City processes more than 5,500 public way use permits annually. The permits, which include signs on neighborhood businesses that face a public street, require full City Council approval. The current process to achieve council approval often takes up to 90 days before a sign permit can be issued. The reforms will cut up to 75 days from the council process by removing the requirement that public way use permit ordinances be published prior to issuance (30 days) and by establishing a process to accept direct introductions of public way use sign permit ordinances to the Committee on Transportation and Public Way (30-45 days).

“Time is money and I don’t want the process to be in the pockets of our small business owners,” said Ald. Beale, who serves as Chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Public Way. “This ordinance will support businesses in the ninth ward and throughout Chicago.”

In addition to reducing the number of days for business owners to obtain their public way sign permit, there are also about 130 other public way uses including canopies, benches and awnings that will have the publication step eliminated in the application process.

“Small businesses drive the Chicago economy and support local communities throughout the city,” said SBAC CEO Elliot Richardson. “We appreciate the work done by the Mayor’s team to enact these reforms and the tremendous support of a dedicated coalition made up of local chambers of commerce and trade organizations who worked with us on this issue,” Richardson added.

The sign reforms and task force build on the Emanuel administration’s record of improving and streamlining City services. In his first year in office, Mayor Emanuel eliminated the job-killing employee head tax and reduced the number of business license types by 60 percent. Earlier this month, Mayor Emanuel launched an online business license application system to allow Chicago’s business owners to apply electronically for required City licenses. The paperless process allows businesses to submit applications and any required documents, as well as pay for any license application fees, through the web.

The Chicago Task Force on Removing Barriers to Employment and Entrepreneurship members are:

Anthony Beale, Alderman 9th Ward

Emma Mitts, Alderman 37th Ward

Patrick O'Connor, Alderman 40th Ward

Andrea Zopp, Deputy Mayor

Maria Guerra Lapacek, Commissioner, BACP

Judy Frydland, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Buildings

Patti Scudiero, Zoning Administrator

Rebekah Scheinfeld, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Transportation

Soo Choi, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Human Resources

Mona Noriega, Commissioner, Chicago Commission on Human Relations

Cate Costa, Director of Entrepreneurship, Chicago Urban League

Melinda Kelly, Executive Director, Chatham Business Organization

Anthony Lowery, Director, Policy and Advocacy, Safer Foundation

Ricardo Meza, Officer, Greensfelder, Hemker & Gale, P.C.

Theresa Mintle, President and CEO, Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce

Melissa McIntyre, Executive Director, Edison Park Chamber of Commerce

Lisa Noller, Partner, Foley & Lardner LLP

D. Lorenzo Padron, Chairman and CEO, Latin American Chamber of Commerce

Preston L. Pugh, Partner, Pugh, Jones & Johnson

Anthony L. Schumann, Partner, Quintairos, Prieto, Wood & Boyer, P.A.

Tanya Triche, Vice President, General Counsel, Illinois Retail Merchants Association

Sam Toia, President and CEO, Illinois Restaurant Association

Howard Tullman, CEO, 1871

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