

# RICHARD R. BOYKIN

Cook County Commissioner – 1<sup>st</sup> District



## YEAR ONE

# A Report to the 1<sup>st</sup> District

On Commissioner Boykin's Inaugural Year in Office

December 2015

## **To the Residents of the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Cook County:**

Let me begin this report by simply saying, “Thank you.”

Throughout my first year in office as your 1<sup>st</sup> District Cook County Commissioner, you have provided critical input and support leading directly to several meaningful successes at the Cook County Board.

I am honored, therefore, to present this Report to you, the people of the 1<sup>st</sup> District, on the accomplishments we have achieved during this first year.

When I was sworn in on December 1, 2014, I took office as the first new Commissioner for our district in almost 16 years.

I view this report- and all my communications efforts as Commissioner- as a means of holding myself accountable to my constituents.

As I stated from the floor in the County Board Room immediately after taking my Oath of Office, “Government, at its best, is not about the people who serve in government. It’s about the people that government serves.”

I continue to work every day to keep faith with that principle, and ask you, the residents, to continue to bless us with your engagement and your participation.

Please sign up for our weekly e-newsletter, follow us on social media, join a 1<sup>st</sup> District Task Force, and/or volunteer your invaluable time and talents.

Again thank you for the opportunity to serve. The best is yet to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Boykin", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**Richard R. Boykin, Cook County Commissioner, 1<sup>st</sup> District**

## My Staff

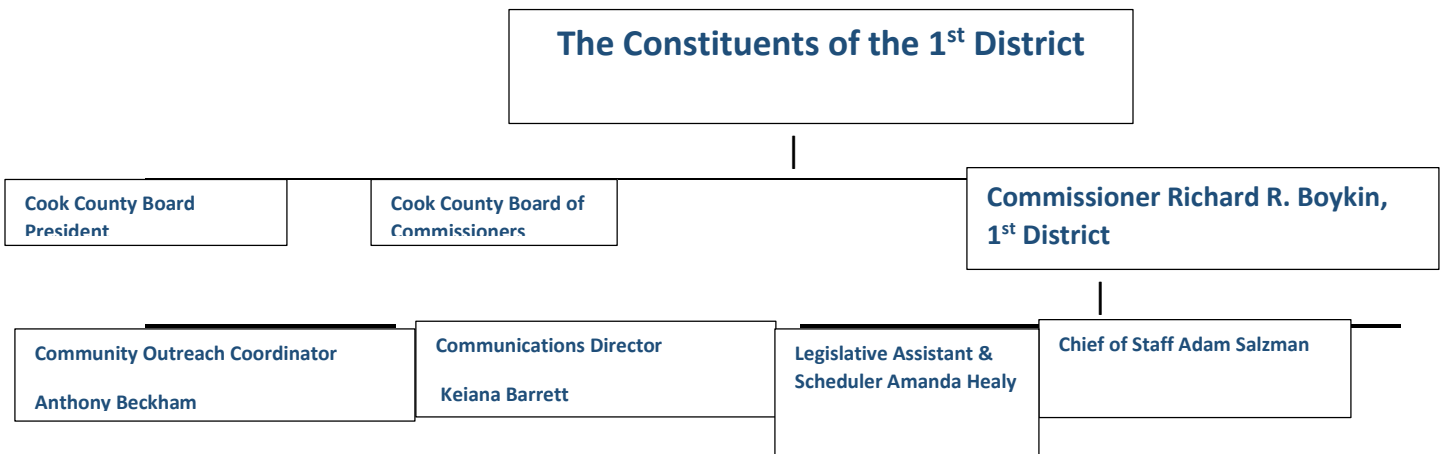
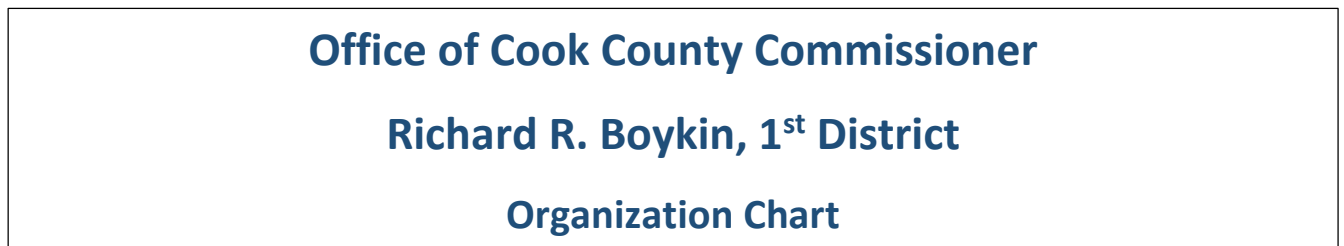
I am fortunate to have a staff of individuals who are experienced at all levels of government and committed to doing the work of the people of the 1<sup>st</sup> District. I am proud of my team!

**Chief of Staff:** Adam Salzman

**Communications Director:** Keiana Barrett

**Community Outreach Coordinator:** Anthony Beckham

**Legislative Assistant and Scheduler:** Amanda Healy



## Legislative Record: December 1, 2014 – December 1, 2015

### Gun Violence



**“There is simply no greater issue facing Cook County than that of gun violence.”**

#### **Cook County Commissioner Richard R. Boykin**

Without question my top policy priority in my first year was gun violence. 60% percent of the West Side of Chicago sits in the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Cook County. That includes the neighborhoods of Austin, and West and East Garfield, where the levels of violence are highest. In addition to these areas, many of the west suburban communities have been confronted with escalating rates of gun violence and heroin addictions, both which frequently end in loss of life and the destabilization of families and communities.

I strongly believe that we need to exhaust all policy options and work tirelessly to curb the scourge of gun violence in Chicago and Cook County that, in 2015, claimed the lives of young children, the elderly, and all age groups in between.

In 2015, I was successful in proposing and passing several initiatives at the County level that I am optimistic will result in 2016 being a far less bloody year than 2015.

### **Gun Violence Policy Highlights**

- **Proposed a Seven Point Plan to Curb Gun Violence, consisting of the following:**
  - Parenting workshops conducted by not-for-profit organizations throughout Chicago and Cook County;
  - Strict enforcement of curfew laws utilizing multiple departments of law enforcement;
  - Expansion of drug courts and other therapeutic court models;
  - Charging individuals pulling the trigger and co-conspirators with Domestic Terrorism;
  - Expansion of utilization of the Sheriff's police in high crime areas;
  - Stiffer penalties for people illegally in possession of firearms and expansion of gun buy-back programs; and,
  - Job training and a real jobs program for areas experiencing high levels of violence, unemployment and poverty.
  
- **Introduced and passed an amendment to the Cook County Blair Holt Assault Weapons Ban.**
  - First-time violators will now be subject to a fine between \$5,000 and \$10,000, with subsequent violations punishable by a fine of up to \$15,000, and a possible jail term of up to one year. The previous fine for first-time violators was between \$1,000 and \$5,000, with a subsequent fine of up to \$10,000 and a possible jail term of up to six months.
  
- **Introduced and passed legislation creating a Cook County Gun Violence Coordinator and Task Force**
  - Authorizes Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart to appoint a Cook County Gun Violence Coordinator, aimed at breaking down bureaucratic barriers and creating working relationships across silos, in an effort to make progress on a single goal: reducing the number of shootings and gun violence. In addition to granting Sheriff Dart the ability to appoint the Gun Violence Coordinator, the ordinance allows for the formation of a 15-member task force to help facilitate a concentrated and cooperative gun violence reduction master plan among government, law enforcement and community stakeholders.
  
  - The Task Force will hold 3 public hearings chaired by the Gun Violence Coordinator to gather testimony and data about the economic, social, and cultural causes of gun violence in Cook County and the best methodology for reducing gun violence. The hearings shall take place over a period of time not to exceed 12

months and shall culminate in a written set of policy recommendations put forth under the authorship of the Gun Violence Coordinator and designed to reduce gun violence in Cook County. The findings/results of these hearings will be made public.

- **Introduced and passed a first-of-its-kind Cook County Ammunition Tax**
  - To help cover the costs of gun violence to our public health system, this tax reflects \$.05 per bullet on centerfire ammunition, used in larger caliber firearms, and \$.01 per bullet on rimfire ammunition, used in smaller caliber firearms. The revenue generated from the tax will support public safety programs that deal with the causes and consequences of gun violence.

### **Criminal Justice Reform**

- Given the escalating number of deaths of African Americans at the hands of law enforcement, along with the pattern of corruption and cover-ups in the Chicago Police Department, and the disproportionate make-up of minorities in our jails, it is apparent that our criminal justice system is broken. Since taking office, I have forged meaningful partnerships with grassroots organizations to advocate for justice and fair treatment, while advancing public policy to ensure that all citizens are afforded equal protection under the law.



- **Introduced and passed “No Choke” Ordinance**
  - Prohibiting the use of choke holds by officers of the Cook County Sheriff’s police, the Department of Corrections, the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center, the Circuit Court Services Department, Forest Preserves Police, Cook County Hospital Police and investigators of the Cook County State’s Attorney, Cook County’s “No Choke” ordinance aims to reduce episodes of excessive force by law enforcement, as well as wrongful death lawsuits against Cook County.

- **Homan Square**

- Earlier this year, I partnered with Congressman Danny K. Davis to ask the Justice Department to open an investigation into the police detention facility in Chicago known as 'Homan Square.' It is well known and documented that the Chicago Police Department has detained over 7,000 individuals there during the course of the facility's existence. It is also well known that a high number of those detentions involved the delay or denial of access to counsel- a clear civil rights violation. As Chair of the Human Relations Committee of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, I convened a public hearing on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015 to hear first-hand testimony from former detainees, advocates and experts. The hearing yielded a great deal of evidence that my office will compile into a report in January of 2016, urging the United States Justice Department to conduct a thorough investigation into the facility as part of its “patterns and practices” investigation into the Chicago Police Department.

- **Laquan McDonald Case**

- In November, after a 13 month delay, the Chicago Police Department released dash-cam video footage of Laquan McDonald being shot 16 times by Chicago Police Officer Jason Van Dyke. The effect of the video's release has been to turn what was a brutal and illegal police murder of an African American teenager into a high-tech execution. Moreover, it has lifted the veil of corruption, police misconduct and lack of transparency that has long covered the city of Chicago. Therefore, I have joined with other voices in successfully calling for a wide-ranging federal investigation of the Chicago Police Department, while demanding the appointment of a special State's Attorney to prosecute Officer Van Dyke, the immediate release of all dashboard camera footage of police-involved shootings, and the formation of an independent, civilian police review board. In 2016 I will continue to work for sweeping reforms and wholesale changes.

## **Community and Economic Development**

- Economic and business development is the cornerstone of building and sustaining healthy, safe and thriving communities. According to a recent Pew Research Center Report, the number of middle-income families has dipped below the 50% threshold. In order for us to effectively reverse this downward spiral in

America, Cook County, and especially in the 1<sup>st</sup> District, we need to enact an economic development strategy that stimulates job growth, enables work force and business development, and encourages world-class educational opportunities.



- **Sales Tax and Amusement Tax Opposition**

- Budgets are not just about dollars and cents. Budgets are about people. Every line item in our Cook County Budget has real life human consequences. Therefore, in analyzing the 2016 proposed budget, I was extremely considerate of the tax payers who would be disproportionately impacted by fee increases and service cuts. I was particularly concerned by the proposed amusement tax increase that stood to add \$90.00 a year to the average cable bill- no small expense to seniors and individuals on fixed incomes. I opposed the amusement tax and successfully partnered with several fellow Commissioners to eliminate it from this year's budget. I also took a strong stand against the one-penny increase in the sales tax, and although our opposition was unsuccessful, I was proud to stand with the taxpayers on this critically important issue. As we look ahead, I will continue to be fiscally prudent and comb through our County budget to identify savings and new revenue streams.

- **Community Development Block Grants**

- Since taking office as Commissioner for the 1<sup>st</sup> District, I have worked doggedly to ensure that vital resources are equally distributed to communities in dire need of support. This year's endowment of over **\$1 million** in Cook County Entitlement Grants will help revitalize and transform the 1<sup>st</sup> District, while investing in social service programs and infrastructure projects designed to enhance the quality of life for our residents. **In 2015, the following 1<sup>st</sup> District**



**stakeholders were the recipients of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and/or Emergency Solution Grants (ESG):**

- UCP Seguin of Greater Chicago: Renovations of Group Homes
- Village of Bellwood: Alley Resurfacing
- Village of Broadview: Alley Resurfacing
- Village of Forest Park: Alley Resurfacing
- City-wide Tax Assistance Program: Tax assistance
- HCP of Illinois: Housing Counseling
- Heartland Health Outreach: HIV/AIDS services
- Housing Forward: Housing Support
- Lawyers Committee for Better Housing: Housing Support (Legal)
- Oak Park Regional Housing Center: Housing Support
- Parenthesis Family Center: Teen Parent Support
- PILLARS: Drug and Alcohol Treatment
- Sarah's Inn: Domestic Violence
- Alliance to End Homelessness: Housing Support
- Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese: Housing Support
- Options for Housing: Housing Support

- **Justice Assistance Grants**

Annually, the Cook County Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management administers the Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program to assist local units of government with critical funding in areas such as: law enforcement, prosecution and court programs; prevention and education programs; and, drug treatment and enforcement and technology improvements. **I am pleased to report the following 1<sup>st</sup> District municipalities were awarded an estimated total of \$ 147,000.00 for the 2015 program year:**

Forest Park Police Department	\$ 19,191.50
Maywood Police Department	\$ 92,662.67
North Riverside Police Department	\$ 16,426.48
Westchester Police Department	\$ 18,720.00

- **Justice Advisory Council Grants**

Cook County Justice Advisory Council Grants are designed to reduce the recidivism rate for individuals released from the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center and the divisions of the Cook County Jail, including the jail general and sentenced populations. Additionally, the grants support violence prevention, intervention and reduction initiatives. **For the program year of 2015, the County awarded \$190,000.00 in grants to the following 1<sup>st</sup> District organizations:**

Westside Health Authority (\$100K): Providing workforce training, job placement services, and other reentry services to the Austin Community.

Presence Behavioral Health Center (\$40K): Providing trauma informed wrap around services with a focus on mental health, to high risk youth and their families throughout Proviso Township.

St. Joseph Services (\$10K): The grant helps to pay for security and travel for the wide range of afterschool activities provided by St. Joseph.

Inspiration Corporation (\$40K): Providing workforce development, training and job placement.

- **Cook County Class 6B & 8 Tax Incentives**

- In an effort to stimulate the local economy, the County provides property tax incentives to businesses to support employment opportunities, rehabilitation costs and private investments. **In 2015, the following businesses located in the 1<sup>st</sup> District were the recipients of tax incentives totaling nearly \$3,600,000.00:**

Mariella Banquet Hall in Maywood	\$ 119,747.00
Thule Inc. in Forest Park	\$ 2,303,596.00
Elizabeth Street Partners LLC in Chicago	\$ 303,189.00
Maro Carton Inc. in Bellwood	\$ 842,619.00

Economic development is at the very top of my priority list and I will continue to seek every opportunity to bring County resources to the 1<sup>st</sup> District.

- **Creating Pathways to Resources**



- Educating and empowering 1<sup>st</sup> District residents and stakeholders is essential to the task of building strong and healthy communities. With that mission in mind, I was proud to host and sponsor the following Community Events and Community Initiatives:

- Urban Agriculture Expo
- Property Tax Appeal Workshop
- The “Be Heard: One Vote Can Change the World” Essay and Art Competition on the Importance of Voting and Civic Participation
- The “Victims of Gun Violence” Memorial Art Exhibit, Featured on the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor of the Cook County Building
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Resource Fair & Hiring Event
- Town Hall Meeting on FY 2016 Cook County Budget
- Gospel Choir Competition
- Senior Appreciation Luncheon & Gospel Concert
- Stop the Gun Violence Summit
- Cook County Land Bank Authority Meeting

- Criminal Justice Reform Town Hall
- Economic Development Town Hall
- “Stop and Frisk” Community Conversation
- Grants Workshop
- 1<sup>st</sup> District Property Tax Assistance Open House
- District Office Open House
- Youth Career Expo
- Veteran’s hiring Fair
- Black History Month Program
- Workshops with Austin, Forest Park, Maywood & Bellwood Chambers of Commerce
- Fellowshipped with over 75 religious congregations across the 1<sup>st</sup> District

## Legislative Digest



- Successfully placed a countywide referendum on the November 2014 ballot calling upon the Governor of Illinois and the State Legislature to appropriate additional funding for mental health treatment.
- Introduced and passed a resolution calling upon President Barack Obama to create a National Commission on Criminal Justice and Race.
- Introduced and passed a resolution addressing the predatory mortgage lending practices of big banks.
- Introduced a resolution calling on the Illinois General Assembly to support SB 105 to restore funding to the state Childcare Assistance Program.
- Introduced and successfully passed an ordinance to ban powdered alcohol in unincorporated Cook County and the Forest Preserve.
- Introduced and successfully passed amendments to Cook County's Blair Holt Assault Weapons strengthening penalties for possession of illegal firearms in Cook County.
- Marshaled the resources and voices of the Cook County Board of Commissioners to pressure the City of Chicago to reform police stops and detentions, which disproportionately impact Black and Latino citizens and too often infringe upon citizens' constitutional rights.
- Established via ordinance a Commission on Cook County Youth which will marshal county resources to improve social and economic outcomes for youth in Cook County.
- Worked with the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office to amend their reporting process to reflect the classification of Hispanic, Latino and Spanish origin deaths.
- Introduced and passed an ordinance declaring it unlawful to purchase, possess, conceal, use, sell or give away a replica firearms in Cook County. (Imitation and replica firearms pose a significant threat to public safety given the high propensity for law enforcement to mistake them for an actual firearm.)

- Introduced and passed a resolution- jointly sponsored with Chicago Alderman Ed Burke- to establish a joint Cook County-Chicago Task Force against Heroin, aimed at curbing our regional heroin abuse epidemic.
- Introduced and unanimously passed a resolution calling on President Barack Obama to convene a White House Conference to be held in Chicago on the issue of gun violence.

### **Cook County 1<sup>st</sup> District Task Forces**

*“Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.” – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*



One of the best ways to contribute to your community is by getting involved civically.

Please consider joining our team by serving on one of the following task forces:

- Criminal Justice Advisory Task Force
- Economic Development Advisory Task Force
- Education Advisory Task Force
- Environmental Advisory Task Force
- Faith-based and Community Partnerships Task Force
- Mental Health Advisory Task Force
- Parenting Advisory Task Force
- Housing Advisory Task Force

These task forces advise me as Cook County Commissioner of the 1st District on a wide range of issues that affect the public welfare. Throughout 2015, each group has played a vital role in promoting efficient, effective, transparent and honest government. For many, serving on a task force is one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives.

To get involved by learning more and applying for membership, please contact my office at (312) 603-4566 or [Richard.Boykin@cookcountyil.gov](mailto:Richard.Boykin@cookcountyil.gov).