Resolution Supporting Government Reform Measures and Amendments to Illinois Senate Bill 0669

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 0669 was filed by Illinois Senator Terry Link (District 30) requiring that the County Board Chairman be elected countywide, starting in 2020; and

WHEREAS, numerous counties have utilized referenda to allow voters to decide if the position of the County Board Chairman should be elected directly by voters; and

WHEREAS, Lake County Board Chairman Aaron Lawlor has outlined a package of reforms for county government; and

WHEREAS, Chairman Lawlor seeks County Board support to amend SB0669 to require a voter referendum in 2018 and ask voters if they would support other reform measures; and

WHEREAS, Chairman Lawlor has proposed amendments to SB0669 that would include asking voters if they would support 1) a countywide elected chairman in 2022; 2) redistricting reform that leverage the Independent Map Amendment process and evaluates different governance structures and policies used by other entities from around the country; and 3) streamlines county government by reducing the size of the county board; and

WHEREAS, Lake County is the only remaining Collar County that does not elect the county board chairman directly by voters during November general elections. Transitioning to a countywide elected chairman should be done by voter referendum and not imposed by the state legislature. Making this decision through new legislation in Springfield without a referendum takes away the voters' right to decide on the leadership structure and management of their county government; and

WHEREAS, efforts to place an amendment on the ballot in Illinois that would allow for an independent, non-partisan mapping process for State legislative lines have failed; and

WHEREAS, Lake County could serve as a model for redistricting reform in Illinois by allowing an independent commission to draw county board boundaries; and

WHEREAS, in the 2011 redistricting process, the county board approved reducing the total number of county board members from 23 to 21 stating it would create efficiencies and cost-savings; and

WHEREAS, Chairman Lawlor believes this is a time for bold leadership and has proposed reforms to position Lake County as a model for government reform statewide; and

WHEREAS, Chairman Lawlor has worked diligently with board members, state legislators, civic leaders, county staff and others to gather insight, information and advice in order to develop this proposal; and,

WHEREAS, these reforms provide the framework for innovative changes to county government that enhance accountability and would benefit from the thoughtful input from leaders around Lake County as well as respected, bipartisan voices at the regional level; and,

WHEREAS, Chairman Lawlor is seeking the County Board's support to form an Ad Hoc Committee to develop policy recommendations that will be presented to the County Board for further action. The ad hoc committee will bring together a bipartisan group of leaders, with diverse perspectives and backgrounds. The committee will be asked to focus on the following: 1) study independent redistricting reform efforts and outcomes including State, city and county reform commissions and other initiatives with similar or comparable restructuring efforts; 2) prioritizing models that ensure strong accountability by elected leaders to the public, maintaining strong professional standards and setting high ethical standards and safeguards in line with the spirit and intent of Lake County's Ethics Ordinance and Standards of Conduct; 3) providing opportunities for stakeholders and the public to share ideas on additional reforms that could be studied in the future.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Lake County Board officially supports pursing amendments to SB0669 as outlined above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Lake County Board Chairman will work with our legislative delegation and the Governor's Office to advocate for these county government reforms.

Dated at Waukegan, Illinois on February 14, 2017.