

ORDINANCE

WHEREAS, the City of Chicago honors the life and legacy of the Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr., a towering moral force whose leadership advanced the civil rights movement, organized a broad and enduring multiracial coalition for a multiracial democracy, mobilized millions of new voters across the nation, expanded the political imagination, and kept hope alive; and

WHEREAS, the Voting Rights Act, a pillar of American democracy, faces escalating threats, with landmark protections weakened and a coordinated, nationwide effort underway to restrict access to the ballot, intimidate voters, and undermine voter participation in the electoral process; and

WHEREAS, the City recognizes that free, fair, and accessible elections are foundational to democratic governance, and that the integrity of the electoral process depends on the safety and independence of those who administer it; and

WHEREAS, the City affirms that any attempt to deploy immigration enforcement to deter lawful voters or to influence lawful election participation constitutes an unacceptable threat to civil rights and election integrity; and

WHEREAS, the City has a compelling interest in ensuring that all lawful voters can participate in elections free from coercion or intimidation; and

WHEREAS, federal immigration enforcement operations have repeatedly resulted in the detention, restraint, or mistreatment of United States citizens, demonstrating that aggressive immigration enforcement tactics can harm citizens as well as non-citizens; and

WHEREAS, documented incidents in Chicago illustrate these harms, including the case of Julio Noriega, a 54-year-old United States citizen born and raised in Chicago who was seized by Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") officers, handcuffed, and detained for hours before agents eventually verified his citizenship and released him without explanation; and

WHEREAS, attorneys and civil rights advocates have documented additional incidents in which federal immigration agents unlawfully detained or arrested individuals in the Chicago region, including lawsuits alleging that ICE violated the rights of a U.S. citizen and multiple other individuals during enforcement operations conducted shortly after large-scale immigration raids began in the region; and

WHEREAS, investigations into immigration enforcement operations in Chicago have revealed that U.S. citizens were zip-tied and detained for hours during a militarized federal raid on a residential apartment building, even though those citizens were not subject to immigration enforcement; and

WHEREAS, national investigations have documented that U.S. citizens have been detained by immigration authorities across the country, with one Pro Publica investigation identifying more than 170 Americans who were arrested or detained by immigration agents despite their citizenship; and

WHEREAS, these incidents demonstrate that aggressive immigration enforcement practices—particularly those relying on rapid raids, collateral arrests, or identity assumptions—can result in wrongful detention, physical restraint, and deprivation of liberty for United States citizens, raising serious constitutional and public safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, government workers, including election workers, election judges, election coordinators, and other individuals performing official duties are increasingly subject to harassment, intimidation, and the non-consensual publication of personal information commonly known as “doxing”; and

WHEREAS, such conduct threatens the integrity of elections, discourages civic participation, and endangers public safety. The purpose of this ordinance is to protect the privacy and safety of all government workers, including poll workers and to prohibit doxing, harassment, and intimidation related to election administration; and

WHEREAS, adopting comprehensive anti-doxing provisions and anti-intimidation measures is necessary to uphold public trust in elections, and to ensure that Chicago remains a national model for election integrity and democratic participation; and

WHEREAS, the misuse of governmental authority, including actions taken under color of law, to intimidate voters or election personnel is incompatible with constitutional protections and violates both the spirit and the letter of State and federal law; and

WHEREAS, the creation of a working group is essential to examine issues affecting voter access and participation; now, therefore,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO:

SECTION 1. Title 2 of the Municipal Code of Chicago is hereby amended by adding a new Chapter 2-200, as follows:

CHAPTER 2-200

THE REVEREND JESSE L. JACKSON SR. FAIR ACCESS TO DEMOCRACY ORDINANCE

2-200-010 Title.

This Chapter shall be known as the “The Reverend Jesse L. Jackson Sr. Fair Access to Democracy Ordinance.”

2-200-020 Definitions.

The following definitions shall apply for purposes of this chapter:

“Government worker” means a temporary or fulltime worker of a unit of local government, school district, or board of elections, exclusively within the City, including vote-by-mail processing staff, any individual serving as an election judge, election coordinator, or early voting official, or any other person designated by the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners to perform official election duties. The term “government worker” does not include a public employee whose identity, home address, or personal information is a matter of public record by virtue of their official duties, or who holds an elected office or a senior appointed position that requires confirmation by a legislative body.

“Personally identifiable information” has the meaning ascribed to that term in Section 5 of the Civil Liability for Doxing Act, codified at 740 ILCS 195/5.

2-200-030 Prohibition on disclosure of personally identifiable information of government workers.

(a) It is unlawful for any person to disseminate, disclose, or publish any personally identifiable information of a government worker without the consent of the government worker, knowing that such information could be used to locate, contact, or target the government worker, if the person acts with the intent to cause death, bodily injury, stalking, harassment, or intimidation of the government worker or a family or household member of the government worker.

(b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to conflict with Section 230 of Title II of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 230), to prohibit any activity protected under the Constitution or laws of the United States or the Constitution or laws of Illinois, or to prohibit reporting criminal activity to law enforcement authorities. Nor shall this section apply when dissemination, disclosure, or publication is required by any federal, State, or local law or regulation, or court rule or court order.

2-200-040 Enforcement and penalties.

Any person who violates Section 2-200-030 of this chapter shall be fined not less than \$500 and not more than \$5,000 for each offense. Each day that a violation continues or occurs, and each violation committed per day, shall constitute a separate and distinct offense to which a separate fine shall apply.

2-200-050 Private right of action.

A government worker whose personally identifiable information is disclosed in violation of Section 2-200-030 of this chapter may bring a civil action for damages, injunctive relief, and reasonable attorney’s fees.

SECTION 2. Chapter 14X-3 of the Municipal Code of Chicago is hereby amended by adding a new 14X-3-301.4, as follows:

14X-3-301.4 Mailbox receptacles.

The owner of any multi-unit residential building shall provide for each residential unit a secure mail receptacle that complies with all applicable U.S. Postal Service rules and regulations.

SECTION 3. The Reverend Jesse L. Jackson Sr. Working Group on Access to Democracy.

(a) *Establishment.*

There is hereby established the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson Sr. Working Group on Strengthening Access to Democracy ("Working Group"). The purpose of the Working Group is to study and make recommendations regarding policies and practices that promote safe, fair, and accessible participation in elections within the jurisdiction of the City of Chicago.

(b) *Purposes.*

The Working Group shall examine issues affecting voter access and participation that fall within the authority of the City of Chicago, including, but not limited to:

- 1) Accessibility of public infrastructure surrounding polling places, including sidewalks, lighting, signage, and transportation;
- 2) Public education and outreach efforts to inform residents about voting rights and registration;
- 3) Strategies for connecting with residents who are disengaged from the democratic process and identifying barriers that prevent participation in elections;
- 4) Approaches to increasing civic engagement and democratic participation throughout the City, including through partnerships with community organizations, educational institutions, and local stakeholders;
- 5) Coordination between City departments and election authorities to support safe and accessible voting;
- 6) The potential impacts of federal law enforcement activities or other governmental actions occurring near polling places that could interfere with or intimidate voters;
- (7) Barriers to voting access within areas subject to City authority;
- (8) Recommendations for City policies, practices, or programs that improve access to the polls and protect voters and election workers;
- (9) Recommendations for changes to state law or election administration practices and transmit those recommendations to appropriate state officials and the Board of Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago; and
- (10) Recommendation to facilitate dialogue among community organizations, voters, and public officials regarding voting access, voter registration and election safety.

(c) *Composition.*

(1) The Working Group shall consist of the following members:

The Chief of Policy for Mayor of the City of Chicago, or their designee, who shall serve as chair;

A member with experience in civil rights, disability access, community organizing, election protection, and or voter engagement appointed by the City Council of Chicago Aldermanic Black Caucus;

A member with experience in civil rights, disability access, community organizing, election protection, and or voter engagement appointed by the City Council of Chicago Aldermanic Latino Caucus; and

Up to seven members jointly appointed by the Chief of Policy, and the appointed members selected by the Black and Latino Caucus, with experience in civil rights, disability access, community organizing, election protection, or voter engagement.

(2) The Working Group shall invite the Board of Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago to designate an ex officio member of the Working Group.

(d) *Meetings.*

The Working Group shall meet at least quarterly and may hold public hearings or community meetings as necessary to gather information and public input.

(e) *Report.*

The Working Group shall submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the Mayor and the City Council no later than June 1 of each year, beginning with the first June 1 following the establishment of the Working Group. The report may include recommendations directed to the Illinois General Assembly and the Board of Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago.

(f) *Staff support.*

The Mayor's Office shall provide administrative support to the Working Group and the Working Group may request assistance from other City departments, as necessary.

(g) *Construction.*

Nothing in this section shall be construed to grant the Working Group authority over the administration of elections.

SECTION 4. SEVERABILITY.

If any part, section, sentence, clause or application of this ordinance shall be adjudged invalid, void and of no effect, for any reason, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the ordinance, or their application to other circumstances.

SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATES.

New Section 2-200-040 inserted by SECTION 1 of this ordinance shall take effect ten days after the passage and publication of this ordinance.

After passage and approval, SECTION 2 of this ordinance shall take effect on September 1, 2026.

The remainder of this ordinance shall take effect upon passage and approval.