

Resolution Designating October 4th as Latino Veterans Day in Chicago

WHEREAS, Latino Americans have served with honor and distinction in every major U.S. conflict—from the Revolutionary War to more recent conflicts—defending our shared values and freedoms; and

WHEREAS, during the Civil War, Latinos served on both sides, and thousands of soldiers from Cook County, including those from Chicago, answered the call to fight in the Union Army; and

WHEREAS, during World War I, approximately 200,000 Latino Americans served nationwide, and Chicago’s burgeoning Mexican and Puerto Rican communities contributed their share to the global conflict; and

WHEREAS, during World War II, an estimated 400,000–500,000 Latino Americans served across all branches of the Armed Forces, including Private First Class Manuel Pérez Jr., raised in Little Village, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for valor in the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, during the Korean War, more than 100,000 Latino service members fought, exemplified by the Puerto Rican 65th Infantry Regiment—the “Borinqueneers”—who earned a Congressional Gold Medal for their valiant service; and

WHEREAS, during the Vietnam War, at least 80,000 Hispanic Americans served, including Staff Sergeant Félix M. Conde-Falcón, raised in Humboldt Park, posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in 1969, and Lance Corporal Emilio A. De la Garza Jr., who enlisted in Chicago and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions; and

WHEREAS, in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (1990–91), roughly 20,000 Latino service members deployed to the Persian Gulf, continuing this legacy of service and sacrifice; and

WHEREAS, in the post-9/11 era, Latino representation in the U.S. Armed Forces grew to nearly one-fifth (19.5%) of active-duty personnel, reflecting a continued and expanding commitment; and

WHEREAS, Chicago is home to one of the nation’s largest Latino populations, with deeply rooted Mexican American and Puerto Rican communities who have long contributed to and served in the U.S. military; and

WHEREAS, the 65th Infantry Regiment Borinqueneers Apartments—a 48-unit affordable housing development for veterans, located at 1045 N. Sacramento Avenue in Humboldt Park—is evidence of Chicago’s ongoing recognition and support of Latino veterans with enduring civic infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the American Legion SSG Jason Vazquez Post #939, based in Chicago and serving under the American Legion 2nd District, Department of Illinois, has been a leading voice in advocating for the recognition of Latino veterans and has worked alongside community leaders to support the establishment of a Latino Veterans Day; and

WHEREAS, the Latino population of Chicago continues to grow, enriching the city's cultural, economic, and civic fabric—and whose military tradition and sacrifice deserve formal public recognition;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Chicago hereby designates October 4th as Latino Veterans Day in the City of Chicago, to honor the extraordinary contributions, sacrifices, and legacy of Latino service members throughout our nation's history; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City of Chicago encourages all residents, schools, businesses, and community organizations to participate in observances that recognize and celebrate the service of Latino veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to veteran organizations, community leaders, and the families of Latino Medal of Honor recipients from the Chicagoland area, as a symbol of the City's enduring respect and appreciation.



Gilbert Villegas
Alderman, 36th Ward