ORDINANCE HONORING RAFAEL CRUZ

WHEREAS, Rafael Cruz Jr. a young Puerto Rican who was born on January 29, 1951 in Salinas, Puerto Rico and raised Chicago, Illinois, where he spent most of his life; and

WHEREAS, Rafael Jr. was affectionately known as Junior and Chino by family and friends. He was the son of Rafael Cruz Sr. and Antonia Cruz; Antonia tragically passed away at the age of 29 when Rafael Jr. was only four years of age. Rafael Sr. later remarried Virginia Ortiz, and together they raised Rafael Jr. in Lincoln Park and Humboldt Park. Rafael Jr. was survived by a large family, including 18 siblings. Rafael Jr. was the father to two children, Dominick Cruz and Carrie Giese-Vazquez, and an uncle to many nieces and nephews; and

WHEREAS, Rafael remains a legend to all of his family. Even those who were born after his tragedy understand the history of his sacrifice, as the elders in the Cruz family ensure that Rafael Cruz Jr. will never be forgotten; and

WHEREAS, on June 4, 1977 near the Humboldt Park tennis courts, Rafael's friend Julio Osorio was kneeling down by the grass talking to Rafael. Lt. Thomas M. Walton accused Julio of possessing a gun and proceeded to shoot both Julio and Rafael multiple times, killing them both. No gun was ever found, only a black hairbrush that Julio held in his hand; and

WHEREAS, as a result of the tragic deaths of both Rafael Cruz and Julio Osorio, profound civil unrest was triggered, now known as the two-day Division Street Riots; and

WHEREAS, the Division Street Riots marked a critical turning point in the political, cultural, and social consciousness of Chicago's Puerto Rican community, galvanizing generations of residents to organize for civil rights, community control, cultural preservation, and self-determination; and

WHEREAS, the deaths of Rafael Cruz and Julio Osorio remain solemn reminders of the human cost of injustice and urgent need for accountability; and

WHERE, designating an honorary street name in memory of Rafael Cruz would serve as a permanent public acknowledgement of this history, honor of his life, and educate future generations about the struggles and resilience of the Humboldt Park community; now, therefore,

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

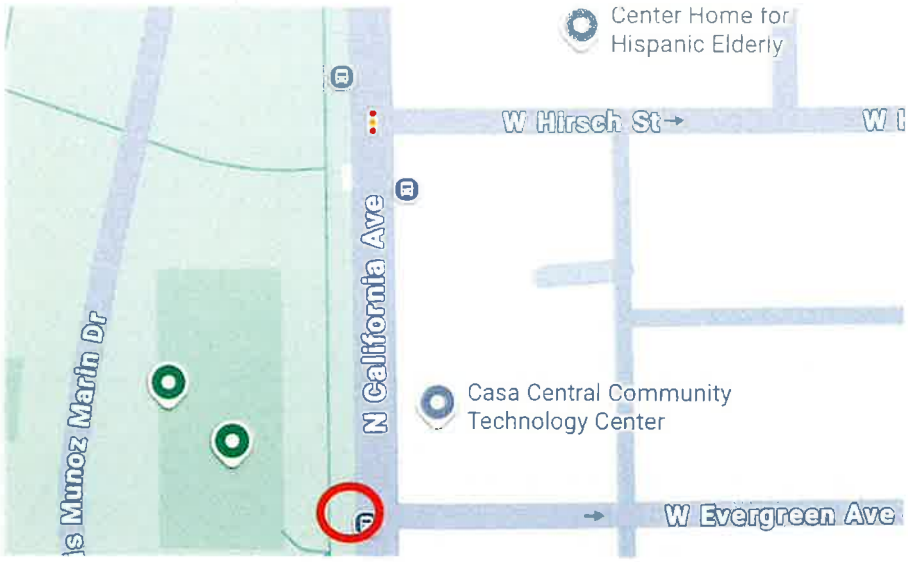
SECTION 1. Pursuant to Section 2-8-040 of the Municipal Code of Chicago, which permits the erection of honorary street-name designations, the Commissioner of Transportation shall take all

necessary action for standardization of N. California Avenue, from West Evergreen Avenue to West Hirsch Avenue as "Rafael Cruz Way."

SECTION 2. This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage and publication.

JESSIE FUENTES
Alderperson, 26th Ward

Sign to be placed on West side of North California Avenue and West Evergreen Avenue





Sign to be placed on West side of North California Avenue and West Hirsch Avenue

