



BGA Policy Statement: BGA Supports Resolution Requiring 48-Hour Notice for Direct Introductions to City Council Committees

Description

Bryan Zarou

Director of Policy, Better Government Association

BZarou@bettergov.org

The Better Government Association policy team supports R2022-687, a resolution modifying Chicago City Council's internal rules to require 48-hour notice and public posting of any measures introduced into the City Council's committees.

The proposed change, introduced by Ald. Brendan Reilly (42nd), would prevent items from being called for a committee vote before the public can read and comment on the legislative language. Currently, so-called "direct introductions" can be used by the administration to quickly introduce and pass items out of committee without substantial public oversight or input.

Ordinances, resolutions, and other items of business considered by City Council must under the regular order of business be introduced at a regular session of council, where each item is assigned to a committee for consideration. Under Rule 41 of Council's [Rules of Order and Procedure](#), the mayor's administrative departments may instead introduce a measure directly into a committee "in order to facilitate an expeditious hearing on said matter or where an emergency exists."

Direct introductions do not become public record until they are introduced at committee meetings. This means the text of a directly introduced proposal often is not available to the public until during or even after the committee meeting at which it is introduced.

Reilly's proposal would require the full text of any directly introduced item to be made available no less than 48 hours before a vote could be taken on the item. This would improve transparency at committee meetings and allow for more thorough and informed public comment. The resolution also requires a written explanation for the emergency or other reason the item cannot follow the normal legislative process, and it prohibits the direct introduction of an item when a "substantially similar"

proposal already is before a council committee.

The Better Government Association policy team supports and encourages the passage of Ald. Reilly's resolution, currently scheduled for consideration by the Committee on Committees and Rules at 2pm on Tuesday, Oct. 25.