City of Chicago

SR2015-256

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	4/15/2015
Sponsor(s):	Emanuel (Mayor) Moore (49) Brookins (21) Moreno (1) Osterman (48) Cochran (20) Mitts (37) Reboyras (30) Thomas (17) Ervin (28) Harris (8) Mendoza (Clerk)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Reparations to victims of torture by Police Commander Jon Burge
Committee(s) Assignment:	Committee on Finance

SUBSTITUTE

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, In a career spanning more than twenty years, Jon Burge rose to the rank of Commander in the Chicago Police Department before he was fired in 1993 for torturing a confession from a murder suspect. More than 100 African-Americans who were detained by the Chicago Police Department between 1972 and 1991 have accused Burge or police officers working under his command of engaging in acts of torture and physical abuse. In 2010, Burge was convicted on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice for falsely denying that he and detectives under his command had engaged in torture and abuse and that he was aware of this torture and physical abuse of suspects; and

WHEREAS, The City Council wishes to acknowledge this exceedingly sad and painful chapter in Chicago's history, and to formally express its profound regret for any and all shameful treatment of our fellow citizens that occurred; and

WHEREAS, The City Council recognizes that words alone cannot adequately convey the deep regret and remorse that we and our fellow citizens feel for any and all harm that was inflicted by Burge and the officers under his command. And yet, words do matter. For only words can end the silence about wrongs that were committed and injustices that were perpetrated, and enable us, as a City, to take the steps necessary to ensure that similar acts never again occur in Chicago; and

WHEREAS, The apology we make today is offered with the hope that it will open a new chapter in the history of our great City, a chapter marked by healing and an ongoing process of reconciliation; and

WHEREAS, Just as a wrongful act followed by an apology, forgiveness and redemption is part of the shared human experience, so too is the widely held belief that actions speak louder than words; and

WHEREAS, For this reason, the City of Chicago wishes, in some tangible way, to redress any and all harm that was suffered at the hands of Jon Burge or his subordinates by extending to those individuals who have a credible claim of torture or physical abuse ("Burge victims") and to the members of their immediate family, and, in some cases, to their grandchildren, a variety of benefits. These benefits will include, among other things, free tuition at the City Colleges of Chicago and free access to the specialized job training and certification programs offered there; specialized psychological, family, substance abuse and other counseling services at a convenient South Side location that will be based on the model of services provided by the Marjorie Kovler Center of the Heartland Alliance; job placement in programs offered by the City and its sister agencies for formerly incarcerated individuals; and prioritized access to

applicable support services and programs currently offered by city departments. The City-provided services and programs to which Burge victims will receive prioritized access may include workplace re-entry support and job training and placement, counseling, assistance for food, housing and transportation, one-on-one case management at Community Re-Entry Support Centers and Community Service Centers, and access to senior care services and resources provided by the Department of Family and Support Services; health services programs coordinated by the Department of Public Health; and small business assistance programs administered by the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection; and

WHEREAS, Because education about the transgressions of the past is essential to laying claim to a future that is free of racism, discrimination, inequality and cruelty, the City of Chicago plans to work with Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, an advocacy organization committed to honoring and seeking justice for survivors of Chicago police violence, to construct a permanent memorial to the Burge victims; and, beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, the Chicago Public Schools will incorporate into its existing U.S. history curriculum for eighth-grade and tenth-grade students a lesson about the Burge case and its legacy; and

WHEREAS, It is the sincere hope of this great City that the process of repair, renewal and reconciliation that we affirm today will help to restore the trust of all Chicagoans in the decency and fairness of their municipal and county governments, including their law enforcement agencies; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, on behalf of all Chicagoans—

(1) acknowledge and condemn, as evil and reprehensible, any and all acts of torture and abuse inflicted upon the Burge victims; and

(2) apologize to the Burge victims for these horrific and inexcusable acts; and

(3) express our most solemn regrets to the families of the Burge victims for any and all harm that they suffered as a consequence of the ordeal that their loved ones were subjected to; and

(4) remember these past events, to ensure that this sad chapter in our City's history is never forgotten; and

(5) reaffirm our City's commitment to righting the wrongs of the past, and in so doing, reassure Chicago's residents that such wrongs will not be repeated in the future; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be presented to Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, as a sign of our respect for their work and of our concern about this important matter.

(9)

CHICAGO May 6, 2015

To the President and Members of the City Council:

Your Committee on Finance having had under consideration

A substitute resolution concerning reparations for Burge torture victims.

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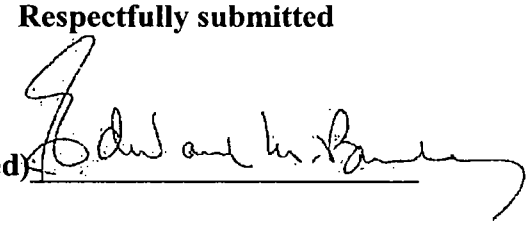
Having had the same under advisement, begs leave to report and recommend that your Honorable Body pass the proposed Resolution Transmitted Herewith

This recommendation was concurred in by _____(a viva voce vote of members of the committee with _____dissenting vote(s).

Respectfully submitted

(signed) 

Chairman