



NEWS RELEASE

FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER JOHN FRITCHEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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Fritchey Moves to Eliminate Office of County Recorder *Referendum Would Merge Office into County Clerk*

CHICAGO - Cook County Commissioner John Fritchey (D-12th) today announced plans to eliminate the office of the Cook County Recorder of Deeds through a county-wide voter referendum and to merge the functions into the Cook County Clerk's office. Fritchey maintains that merging the two offices will allow for more efficient service to the public while saving approximately one million dollars each year.

Fritchey stated that he intends to introduce a resolution to the Cook County Board seeking to have the proposal put to a public referendum. Pursuant to state law, the question would then be placed on the November, 2012 General Election ballot asking voters whether they support such a merger. If approved by a simple majority of voters, the two offices would be consolidated by the end of 2015.

"The more I looked at it, the clearer it became that having a separately-elected Clerk and Recorder is redundant and inefficient," said Commissioner Fritchey. "By merging the functions of the Recorder's office into the Clerk's office, we can improve constituent service, reduce political and bureaucratic inefficiency, and save taxpayer dollars."

Fritchey stated that offices which are narrowly drawn and administrative in nature - like the Recorder of Deeds - provide an excellent opportunity for consolidation with another office. The County Clerk's office was the obvious choice to adopt the Recorder's functions, as many of the Recorder's duties align with already existing divisions under the Clerk. Fritchey noted that out of the ten largest counties in the country, Cook County is one of only two that has a separately elected recorder and clerk.

"As we look for ways to close a significant county budget deficit, we need to look to how we can make county government smarter, better, and more efficient," said Fritchey. "I believe that it makes no sense to have an \$11.7 million dollar, 206-employee agency (based on

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Cook County approved and adopted 2010 appropriations) tasked solely with record-keeping. And I believe that if we allow the public to decide whether they want their tax dollars to continue to be spent this way, their answer will be a resounding no.”

In their recently released *Cook County Modernization Report*, the Civic Federation stated that “assuming a 5% reduction, as much as \$0.8 million dollars could be saved” by a merger of the two offices.

Another advocate of the merger is former Congressman and former Cook County Commissioner Mike Quigley, who supported the idea in his report on streamlining Cook County government titled, “*Reinventing Cook County*”.

"The mission of government matters, and we need to ask ourselves how we would design it if we had the chance to start from scratch," said Quigley. "The goal is a system that delivers services to taxpayers in the most efficient, cost-effective, and transparent way possible. Consolidating offices with similar functions is an important step in the right direction and I commend Commissioner Fritchey for his efforts to make that concept a reality."

Fritchey's efforts to consolidate the two offices is the latest in his '*Towards a Better Cook County*' initiative, a series of ideas designed to improve efficiency and accountability in county government. Previous efforts have included the recently-enacted open data ordinance making county information available to the public, and LookatCook.com, a website designed to provide the public unprecedented details about the county budget.

Fritchey intends to introduce his resolution to the County Board later this month and have it voted upon in November.

Additional information regarding Commissioner Fritchey's proposal can be found in a Power Point presentation located at <http://www.fritchey.com/?p=415>

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