



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 4, 2018

**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**Prepared Remarks of Mayor Rahm Emanuel**

On my first day as Mayor of this great city, I promised to make tough choices and face the hard truths we had not confronted, even when it hurts. Every day for the past seven and a half years, that is what I have tried my best to do – to improve our schools, make our community colleges relevant, put our fiscal house on stable footing, confront violence and rebuild trust between police and community, modernize our transportation systems, invest in our neighborhood parks and libraries and grow our economy into an engine of jobs and opportunity for all. I'm not shy, and together we've never shied away from a challenge.

Today, the time has come to make another tough choice. As much as I love this job and will always love this city and its residents, I have decided not to seek re-election.

This has been the job of a lifetime, but it is not a job for a lifetime. You hire us to get things done – and pass the torch when we've done our best to do what you hired us to do.

I have approached public service the only way I know how for the last 23 years—giving 100 percent, 24 hours a day, seven days a week—for President Clinton, in Congress and in its leadership, as President Obama's Chief of Staff and finally as your Mayor. For the last seven and a half years I've given my all every day and left everything on the field. This commitment has required significant sacrifice all around. Now, with our three kids in college, Amy and I have decided it is time for us to write a new chapter together.

In a few moments, I'll speak to my Cabinet, and tell them to get ready to sprint for the finish line in May. We have more to do, and from now until then, we'll do everything in our power to get it done and walk out the door hopefully leaving Chicago and Chicagoans in a stronger place. We will stand ready and eager to work with whoever is lucky enough to come next and ensure a smooth and positive transition. We owe our city nothing less.

But today I want to thank the people of Chicago for the opportunity to serve. It will fill my eyes with tears to leave a job I love, and already my heart is full with gratitude. We have worked together. We have celebrated progress together. We have grieved together. Amy and I made friendships across this city that will last a lifetime.

I want to thank Amy for being such a remarkable First Lady. We've been together for 27 years. When we got married, I told her I would never run for office. Six elections later, she's the only reason I have made it this far.

We're blessed with three great children, and I owe them so much as well. Politicians always say they're leaving office to spend more time with their family. My kids were smart enough to see that coming and scattered to the two coasts, so as of the other day we are now empty nesters.

Amy and I are still young – and Amy still looks it. And we look forward to writing that next chapter in our journey together.

I'll always be here for the future of this city – not as mayor, but in the most important role anyone can play, as citizen. I hope I'll find ways to answer the call I've asked of every citizen: to do my part to stand up for the next generation, who deserve the doors of opportunity to be open and the spark of hope to light their eyes.

I'm grateful to my parents for lighting that spark in me. And I want to thank my grandfather, who at the age of 13, took an enormous chance a century ago by immigrating here from Eastern Europe, fleeing the pogroms, to meet a third cousin he did not know in a city whose name he could not pronounce.

In four congressional runs on the North and Northwest Sides – and in two races for Mayor – you cast aside old history and voted for a Jewish kid with the middle name Israel. I will always be profoundly grateful for that and what it means to my family.

This morning, as we start a new school year, I went to Bronzeville Classical to welcome students back for the start of a new school year and to Perez Elementary to mark the opening of universal full day pre-K in Chicago. The changes we have made to our school system – universal full day pre-K, universal kindergarten and a longer school day and year will add up to nearly four more years of class time for Chicago's students. In the end of the day what matters most in public life is four more years for our children, not four more years for me.

Together, since May of 2011, through thick and thin, we tried to do right by our city's future. No matter how difficult the path we never wavered or shrunk from our responsibilities. And I will never forget the honor it has been to serve alongside you the people of Chicago every step of the way.

From the bottom of my heart: Thank you. God bless you. And God bless the people of Chicago.

###