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**MAYOR EMANUEL URGES ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO OVERRIDE GOVERNOR
RAUNER'S VETO OF VOICES ACT**

The bill would help safeguard the rights of immigrant victims of sexual assault, human trafficking and domestic violence

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today sent a letter urging members of the Illinois General Assembly to override Governor Bruce Rauner's veto of Senate Bill (SB) 34, the Voices of Immigrant Communities Empowering Survivors (VOICES) Act.

"It is our fundamental obligation as public servants to ensure dignity and safety for the defenseless and marginalized," said Mayor Emanuel. "While the Trump administration has turned its back on vulnerable families seeking shelter from abuse, we cannot allow Governor Rauner to have our state government mimic that immorality and hard-heartedness."

The VOICES Act is a bipartisan bill that was sponsored by President John Cullerton and Representative Lisa Hernandez to help safeguard the rights of immigrant victims of sexual assault, human trafficking and domestic violence. The bill would also standardize a statewide process for survivors to obtain visa protection from law enforcement and create safe harbor for those with nowhere else to turn.

The Mayor is calling on Illinois lawmakers to stand as a model for creating legislation that brings compassion, clarity and dignity to survivors and promotes equal access to protections under the law across the state by overriding the veto of SB34.

Throughout his career, Mayor Emanuel has long advocated for support of domestic violence victims and their families and continues fighting to keep Chicago a welcoming city for all.

Earlier this year, the Mayor introduced a two percent homeshare surcharge to help increase housing options for victims of domestic violence while helping increase access to critical resources. He also reaffirmed the City's commitment to protecting its employees who are survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault by providing up to one month of

paid leave for employees who qualify for the Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act ("VESSA").

In 2017, Mayor Emanuel joined U.S. Senator Dick Durbin and Congressman Luis Gutierrez in launching the "Chicago is With You," task force. The task force worked to collaborate on mental health, legal services, employer trainings, and public education to ensure the City was delivering comprehensive services to immigrants, refugees and other disenfranchised communities. Chicago's first-ever Legal Protection Fund was established under the task force. In its first year, the Fund had trained more than 450 community volunteers, conducted 700 Know Your Rights workshops and touched over 25,000 immigrants through community based outreach, education, legal consultations and courtroom representation.

In 2016, the Mayor worked with WINGS Metro to open the first domestic violence shelter built in the city in more than a decade. The Apna Ghar Domestic Violence Shelter quickly followed in 2017, and today specializes in outreach and advocacy on behalf of all immigrant communities.

Mayor Emanuel and then-Senator Joseph Biden worked together to craft the Violence Against Women Act ("VAWA") in 1994. The landmark federal legislation developed a comprehensive approach to improve the criminal justice response to violence against women. The VAWA provides access to services victims and their families need.

National efforts continue through the Cities for Citizenship Campaign, a group Mayor Emanuel began with the Mayors of New York City and Los Angeles, which has grown into a bipartisan effort which works with 30 City and county leaders across America. Most recently, the City celebrated the ruling from the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals upholding a nationwide injunction that prevents the U.S. Department of Justice from imposing new conditions on a federal grant that provides critical crime prevention funds for community policing efforts and other public safety measures.

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