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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT INTRODUCES POLICY ENHANCING SEXUAL HARASSMENT LAWS IN THE CITY

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Chicago Commission on Human Relations today introduced a new ordinance that will enhance the City's laws related to sexual harassment. These changes come as part of the Mayor's citywide strategic plan to address gender-based violence and human trafficking. Specifically, these changes seek to support survivors in reporting sexual harassment and hold those who cause harm accountable.

"For far too long, survivors of sexual harassment have struggled silently and felt alone," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Today, we are taking a huge step forward to change this reality by creating workplaces where they can feel safe and have their voices heard. The introduction of this ordinance aims to create trusting environments where people will not only feel protected and encouraged to speak up against sexual harassment, but see perpetrators be held accountable for their actions."

The amendments to the City ordinances increase the statute of limitations for people to report sexual harassment from 300 days to 365 days. Additionally, new safety measures will be in place allowing the Chicago Commission on Human Relations (CCHR) to delay notifying the respondent for 30 days to allow the person experiencing harm to request accommodations such as a changed work schedule or a new worksite. The penalty for violating this ordinance is also increasing from \$1,000-\$5,000 to \$5,000 to \$10,000.

"We are happy to have worked with the Mayor on this ordinance to help strengthen protection for all workers from sexual harassment. This is a significant step in making workplaces safer and allowing workers to reach their full potential in their chosen fields free from the pressure of sexual harassment," said Nancy Andrade, Commissioner on Human Relations.

All employees will also be required to have one hour of prevention training aligned with State law as well as one hour of bystander intervention training. Employees who supervise other employees will be required to have an additional two hours of



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training. All employers will also be required to have a written policy and post a written notice where all employees can see. If passed, these new requirements go into effect on July 1, 2022. Trainings, model policies, and written notice will be available on CCHR's website.

“Far too many women experience sexual harassment in the workplace. Black and Brown women, and women in low-paid jobs, are especially vulnerable. This discriminatory behavior can have far-reaching ramifications on a woman’s career and her earning potential, as well as damaging her emotional and physical health” said Cherita Ellens, President and CEO of Women Employed. “Women Employed applauds the City of Chicago for working to strengthen protections against sexual harassment, and we applaud the Mayor’s Office for reaching out to advocates like Women Employed to ensure this ordinance helps make our city a safer and more equitable place for working women.”

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