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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES CELIA MEZA TO SERVE AS CORPORATION
COUNSEL FOR THE CITY OF CHICAGO**

Chicago – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today named Celia Meza as Corporation Counsel for the Chicago Department of Law (DOL), becoming the first Latina to ever hold this position at City Hall. Meza, who has been serving in an interim capacity for the past five months, will take the role as the lead attorney for the City of Chicago in providing legal counsel and representation for the more than forty City of Chicago Departments, the City Boards, and the City Council.

"Celia is an extraordinarily talented lawyer who has and continues to demonstrate her legal prowess—even in times of crisis," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Her more than 25 years of legal and ethics experience, dedication to public service and serious approach to this role is exactly what we need during what is still a very difficult time for our city. I want to thank Celia for all of the hard work she's done since becoming Acting Corporation Counsel back in December and congratulate her on permanently stepping into the role."

As the City's top lawyer, Meza will be leading the effort to implement the legal and ethical policies, reforms and priorities of the administration. She will also work together with City Council in the introduction of legislation that benefits Chicago residents. In this role, Meza will manage the over 200 lawyers that handle the employment litigation, torts, police misconduct litigation, transactional matters, legislative projects, and enforcement of the Municipal Code on behalf of the City.

Meza is a skilled attorney with labor, employment, ethics, compliance, investigations, and corporate experience. She has a diverse government background having worked in federal, state, and local government legal positions. Meza's public sector background includes service as an Assistant United States Attorney in the Criminal Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Chicago, service in the City's Office of Inspector General, the Mayor's Office and prior service in the Office of the Corporation Counsel. Meza also has a background in corporate work having served as in-house counsel in public and private corporations, an institution of higher education, and a non-profit organization.



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"I began my legal career in the Office of the Corporation Counsel, and it is an honor and a privilege to return to take on this very important role" said Meza.

"Throughout my career as a public servant, I have committed myself to integrity, ethics, and equality for all. I am the proud daughter of migrant farmworkers and thrilled to be the first Latina to serve in this role in a time when diversity, inclusion and equity are essential tenants to building a stronger city."

"During my time as Chicago's Corporation Counsel, Celia quickly proved herself to be one of my most prepared, reliable and no-nonsense deputies," said Mara Georges, Managing Partner at Daley & Georges, Ltd. and the City of Chicago's longest-serving Corporation Counsel. "She was a tremendous lawyer then and remains a tremendous lawyer now. I have full confidence in Celia's ability to do a great job even under immense pressure and wish her every success in this well-deserved role."

"There has never been a more important time for Chicago's Corporation Counsel to look like and share the diverse lived experiences of so many of Chicago's residents," said Chicago State University President Zaldwaynaka Scott. "That's why I was determined to seek out a diverse candidate during the search process and why I am beyond thrilled that Celia was selected for the role. Not only will she bring over two decades of legal experience into this role that includes roles in the public sector, but she will also make history by becoming the first Latina to ever serve as Corporation Counsel."

"HLAI and our membership applauds Mayor Lightfoot's historic decision to make Celia Meza's appointment to the role of Corporation Counsel permanent," said Janneth Lanini, President, Hispanic Lawyers Association of Illinois. "We are beaming with pride as Celia shatters another glass ceiling as the first Latina to serve in this role. As one of HLAI's past officers and current members, we know Celia shares our mission and values, and most importantly, is well qualified to manage our City's Law Department. We look forward to celebrating her accomplishments in this new role, and the impact this appointment can have in our communities."

Meza is a graduate of the University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign and the University of Iowa College of Law. She was admitted to the Illinois Bar in 1994. She is a long-time resident of Chicago and the proud single parent of two children.

Meza's appointment will be submitted to City Council for approval.

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