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Tobolski Passes Cook County Medical Examiner Reforms

“These are people’s loved ones-somebody’s sister, somebody’s brother, somebody’s mother- not trash. This ordinance codifies the dignity and respect that Cook County citizens deserve.” - Cook County Commissioner Jeff Tobolski

Chicago, IL –Demanding accountability at the Medical Examiner’s Office, Commissioner Jeff Tobolski (D-McCook) unanimously passed a reform ordinance today aimed at putting stricter notification procedures in place at the Morgue, making the Medical Examiner report to the County Board quarterly, and placing a 60 day maximum time limit on how long bodies can remain at the County Morgue.

A recent investigation by ABC 7 told the horrifying story of Brian Warren’s missing body. On January 11th, someone at St. Bernard Hospital told the family that Brian Warren had died of a heart attack and was taken to the county morgue. After repeatedly calling the morgue and being told that their brother’s body was not in their custody, the Warrens finally found out that Brian’s body was indeed at the Morgue. It was among the hundreds of bodies that had been stacked up in open boxes and bags, thrown onto shelves, and piled on the floor of the morgue. He had been there for two weeks unaccounted for.

“What happened to the Warren family is completely unacceptable,” said Tobolski. “These are people’s loved ones-somebody’s sister, somebody’s brother, somebody’s mother- not trash. This ordinance codifies the dignity and respect that Cook County citizens deserve.”

“I am grateful for Commissioner Tobolski’s leadership and hard work on this issue,” said Bernice Terry, Brian Warren’s sister. “Our family went through a heart wrenching and unnecessary experience. This ordinance assures that what happened to our family won’t happen again.”

Cook County District 16 includes the villages of Berwyn, Cicero, Schiller Park, Franklin Park, McCook, Hodgkins, Lyons, Summit, Willow Springs, Countryside, Western Springs, LaGrange, LaGrange Park, Northlake, Forest Park, Westchester, Stone Park, Berkeley, Broadview, Hillside, Melrose Park, Brookfield, Riverside, North Riverside and Stickney.

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