RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION PLACING A BINDING REFERENDUM TO VOTERS TO ABOLISH THE OFFICE OF MCHENRY COUNTY CORONER

WHEREAS, Article VII, Section 4 of the Illinois Constitution empowers counties to elect or appoint a coroner; and

WHEREAS, McHenry County has an elected Coroner whose duties and responsibilities are spelled out by state law (55 ILCS 5/3-3); and

WHEREAS, the Coroner is responsible for the investigation and certification of cause and manner of unusual death; and

WHEREAS, the Coroner is often a county's first warning against public health emergencies such as contagious disease and toxic substances; and

WHEREAS, the history of the office of coroner dates back more than 900 years, and the practice of electing the coroner dates back to American independence; and

WHEREAS, the only requirements under Illinois law to be elected McHenry County Coroner are to be at least 18 years old, a registered voter, and a McHenry County resident; and

WHEREAS, forensics and medical science have evolved into disciplines requiring specialized education and a highly technical set of skills; and

WHEREAS, the centuries-old practice of electing people with no medical or forensic background to the Coroner's Office is wholly inadequate in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, the vital job of investigating unusual deaths and consoling next of kin in their time of need should be left to trained professionals; and

WHEREAS, the County Board wishes to professionalize the office of Coroner by hiring through best management practices.

WHEREAS, Article VII, Section 11 of the Illinois Constitution, and state law (55 ILCS 5/3) allow for the elimination of the office of Coroner by voter referendum; and

WHEREAS, voters should be allowed to weigh in on the future of an elected office.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by this County Board of McHenry County, Illinois, that the binding referendum as stated shall be placed in the ballot at the general election, to be held on November 3, 2020, and shall appear in substantially the following form:

“Shall the Coroner of McHenry County be eliminated as an Elected Office and be replaced by an appointed Coroner, appointed by a McHenry County Board Committee, to be effective November 30, 2020?”; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the McHenry County Clerk, as the election authority of McHenry County, is hereby directed to certify said binding referendum in accordance with the Illinois Election Code on or before August 17, 2020; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the McHenry County Clerk is hereby authorized to distribute a certified copy of this resolution to the County Administrator, the McHenry County Sheriff’s Office, and to the McHenry County Interim Coroner.

DATED at Woodstock, Illinois, this 17th day of December, A.D., 2019.
ATTEST:

Joseph J. Tirio, County Clerk