



Making history: help give Chicago *our first city charter.*

A broad coalition is forming to support charter reform — neighborhood groups and major institutions, side by side. **We want you in it.**

COALITION CO-CONVENERS

A More Just Chicago

A community organizing initiative focused on building power in Chicago's neighborhoods and advancing systemic reforms to city governance.

Civic Federation

A nonpartisan government research organization promoting efficient and accountable government in the Chicago region since 1894.

★ WHAT IS A CITY CHARTER?

- A charter is a **constitutional document for a city**. It defines the role, authority, and structure of a city government.
- Charters define procedures for transparent decision-making, establish accountability structures, and codify the duties and powers of elected officials.
- **Chicago is the only major U.S. city without a charter** — among the 15 largest cities in the country, every city but Chicago has one.

★ WHAT DOES HB 5282 DO?

Chicago needs a change in state law to allow for a city charter. House Bill 5282, *the Municipal Home Rule Charter Act*, sponsored by Rep. Kam Buckner, will create this legal pathway. The bill sets basic ground rules for Chicago to establish a charter commission to draft a city charter for voter referendum approval. It doesn't mandate policy outcomes or prescribe how the city should operate. It simply makes a participatory, citizen-approved charter process possible.

★ HOW WOULD A CITY CHARTER HELP?

- **Improving decision-making.** Charters create enforceable standards and rules for how ordinances are passed and budgets are created.
- **Strengthening public accountability.** Charters can empower oversight by mandating information sharing and regular audits.
- **Building trust in city government.** Policy disasters like the parking meter deal are symptoms of a government with no consistent, enforceable rulebook. A charter would create one.

★ WHAT IT MEANS TO JOIN

- Your organization's name is **listed publicly** showing legislative support. (*Lawmakers regularly ask who supports a bill.*)
- You'll be asked to file a **witness slip**¹ in committee when the bill is heard.
- You'll be invited to a **lobby day** or lawmaker visit in Springfield or Chicago.
- You'll receive timely updates and messaging guidance as the bill advances.
- If the bill changes substantively, we'll re-confirm your support before listing you again.

How do I join the coalition? Joining takes only a few minutes.

01 Formally support

Indicate your support for HB 5282 as currently written.

02 Provide your name

Share your organization's name or logo for coalition materials.

03 Designate a contact

Identify a point of contact who can sign on your behalf.

04 Join the effort

Participate in advocacy moments — slips, visits, outreach — as capacity allows.

Questions, or ready to join?
Contact the coalition to add your organization.

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¹A **witness slip** is an official form filed with the Illinois General Assembly to register your organization's position on a bill in committee (support, oppose, or neutral). It is public record and takes about two minutes to complete.