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It's Time to Unite, Heal and Build
A statement by Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr.

Mayor-elect Lori Lightfoot said it best last night as she and Chicago made history, sending a beacon of hope and change across the country.

“Our differences are nothing compared to what we can achieve together.”

Chicago is a great world city - a city of big shoulders! Made up of 50 wards and 77 neighborhoods, Chicago is a melting pot where more than 150 different languages are spoken. We are the city established by DuSable, made politically renowned by the likes of Daley, Byrne and Washington. Chicago is the city of Jane Addams and Ida B. Wells, of mosques and churches, synagogues and temples; it is the city of Gwendolyn Brooks, Sandra Cisneros and Mike Royko, of Bears and Bulls, of Sox and Cubs, and Hawks that soar on the winter wind and glide across the ice. Chicago, that electric, eclectic city, our city, elected our first African American woman mayor after a long, hard-fought and sometimes contentious campaign.

That was last night - history was made, confetti fell, cheers went up. This morning, the work begins because it's healing time in Chicago. This morning the sun rises as we reset our political clocks from competition to cooperation, a mission the mayor-elect's opponent, Toni Preckwinkle, an outstanding public servant, is also committed.

Today, it's unity time. Now is the time to come together and go to work building bridges that bring us together and tearing down walls that keep us apart - walls between neighborhoods and people, walls between justice for some and opportunity for all.

Today we join hands to lift our city to higher heights and bigger dreams. When we lift together, those at the bottom rise and everybody benefits. When we lift, we get our priorities right because we know that schools cost less than jails, that job training is more valuable than gang initiations, and investing in all of Chicago is the best remedy for addressing the environment that seems to breed violence and death. We can and must build up the abandoned lots and put people back to work. When the South and West sides of the city are developed and rebuilt that means jobs and opportunity for everybody. When the jobs come in, guns and drugs must get out. When hope returns, despair must retreat.

This morning, the sun rises to illuminate the future Chicago that is hopeful and bright! Chicago, this world-class jewel, can be the greatest city on earth. Here, we have the talent, the geography, the people and the diversity. Chicago must be built with her compass pointed toward true north,

based on direction and inclusion, not complexion and exclusion. When you fly into Chicago at night, you can see the northern lights of the city hundreds of miles out. Today, let the lights of our city, made bright by hope and possibility, illuminate our shared hope for brighter days ahead. We will be the city of big dreams again, but only if we come together and work harder than we have ever worked before.

The sun has risen in Chicago! Now the work begins to build One Chicago, the city with big shoulders. May she become the one big tent where everybody can come under her protective canopy, and no one gets left out! Good morning, Chicago! It is time to get to work!!

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Rainbow PUSH Coalition is a multi-racial, multi-issue, progressive, international organization that was formed in December 1996 by the Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. through merging of two organizations he founded Operation PUSH People United to Serve Humanity (estab. 1971) and the Rainbow Coalition (estab. 1984). With headquarters in Chicago and offices in Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New York and Oakland, the organization works to make the American Dream a reality for all citizens while advocating for peace and justice around the world. RPC is dedicated to improving the lives of all people by serving as a voice for the voiceless. Its mission is to protect, defend and gain civil rights by leveling the economic and educational playing fields while promoting peace and justice around the world.

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