

Friends of the Parks

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chicago, Illinois (May 1, 2015):

President Obama, Welcome Home! Your fight against global warming will help save the planet. We ask you to remember your roots and consider saving the parks as well.

President Obama has a chance to leave two legacies to Chicago - to build here on the South Side of Chicago a great Presidential library, but to leave intact as well the historic Jackson and Washington Parks as they were originally designed by visionary landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. Friends of the Parks welcomes the selection of Chicago as a site for this important deposit of the President's papers, but urges the President to preserve the integrity of Chicago's historic parks as well. To the President we say: We admire your record as a champion of the environment, including the park system in your home town. Please leave us the double legacy of a world class library and world class parks. Find a site that does both. In particular we ask you to consider the tremendous benefits that can be gained by placing the Presidential Library on the 11 acre University of Chicago, City, and CTA site on the northwest corner of 55th and King Drive. This land has been sitting vacant and undeveloped for years and is located directly across the street from Washington Park, one of the most majestic parks in the nation.

Chicago ranks 14th on a list of the 18 most-densely populated cities in the country in terms of parkland per 1000 residents. Illinois ranks 48th out of 50 states in terms of parkland per capita. President Obama knows these statistics and knows the importance of parks in the lives of ordinary people. In fact, as a young community organizer President Obama came to Friends of the Parks and asked how we might work together to increase park space in South Side communities. We hope the builders of the Obama Library follow the lead of both the Kennedy Library in Boston and the Clinton Library in Little Rock and add park space to the city.

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