

News...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

For Immediate Release:

November 18, 2009

For More Information:

State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford

(773) 378-5902

Ford Introduces Legislation to Require Broad Strategy to Increase African American Employment in State Government

CHICAGO – With recent estimates by the Economic Policy Institute putting unemployment for Illinois' African Americans near 19 percent, State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) is hopeful that legislation he filed on Tuesday to require the state's central employment arm to develop and implement new plans to increase African American employment at all levels of state government will help brighten an increasingly dire outlook for those needing employment.

"This recession has hit Illinois' African Americans hard," Ford said. "I've been working with many community organizations and residents, and together we came up with the ideas that make up the framework of this legislation. If we don't improve the opportunities for jobs soon, a whole generation of wealth and gains previously made could be lost for good. Because the unemployment rate is higher amongst African Americans, I feel the government should be guided by the principle of social justice and address the problem of few employment opportunities for the group of people who are most affected."

Ford's House Bill 4683 would require the Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) to develop and implement plans to increase the number of African Americans employed by state government, especially in supervisory, technical, professional, and managerial positions. Once plans are developed, state agencies will be required to implement them and report annually on their progress.

Ford pointed to agencies such as the Illinois Department of Corrections, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and the Illinois State Police, which employ African Americans at percentages of approximately 12 percent, 8 percent, and 10 percent of their total number of employees, respectively. He also noted that the State of Illinois Procurement Policy Board has no African American members.

~more~

To assist CMS in creating, implementing, and overseeing hiring plans, Ford's legislation creates an 11-member, unpaid advisory council to be made up of experts on African American issues, as well as a full-time African American Employment Coordinator within CMS. The advisory council will meet with state agencies and the Employment Coordinator quarterly to provide consultation and assistance in meeting the goal of increased hiring of African Americans.

"Greene Acres Consulting Group is honored to be working with State Rep. Ford in the creation and development of House Bill 4683," said Principal William N. Burch. "We believe that the state of the African American community shows that this piece of legislation is needed, and we urge all citizens to call their state legislators to ensure that they support this bill. We would like to thank State Rep. Ford for standing on the front line with the African American community in addressing the lack of employment opportunities within our community."

#