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FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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Rep. Ford Concludes Legislative Session, Will Continue Working to Help Groups Struggling with Unemployment

SPRINGFIELD, IL – State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) on Tuesday helped to close out the spring session of the Illinois General Assembly, a months-long effort that was complicated by a lingering economic recession, but still resulted in victories for small businesses and public school students.

“I am proud to have helped create and chair the House Small Business Empowerment and Workforce Development Committee, and I am pleased with the bipartisan work we have accomplished so far this year, focusing on the struggles facing small businesses and looking for ways to improve the business climate in our state,” Ford said. “Though we have wrapped up the spring session for the year, I plan to continue the work of the committee through the summer, focusing on how we might overcome the barriers to employment facing groups like older workers, youth, veterans and minorities.”

To help small businesses tap new sources of revenue and create jobs, Ford sponsored and guided the passage of House Bill 1386, which requires the state’s Central Management Services to set a target of 10% of state contracts to be awarded to small businesses. The legislation further requires each state office and agency to file a compliance plan to outline strategies to increase small business contracts with state government.

“Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, employing most people in Illinois,” Ford said. “It makes sense that if the state of Illinois has a need for vendors or service providers, we must strengthen our preference for small businesses so we can get services and create jobs at the same time.”

In addition to helping small businesses, Ford is planning hearings on a package of legislation he has filed to increase state employment for young people, older job seekers and veterans, groups that currently struggle with high levels of unemployment.

Ford also helped to pass Senate Bill 7, a bipartisan package that reforms the K-12 educational system in Illinois with the support of legislators, teachers unions, reform groups, and the business community. Under the proposed measure, teacher performance would be a key factor in the dismissal of teachers, teacher certification, the hiring process, and teacher tenure. “We have set a national standard on how to bring together teachers’ unions, administrators, parents and students to refocus public education away from the best interests of adults and back to what’s best for kids, and that’s something we should be extremely proud of,” Ford said. “Now it’s time to apply the same effort to reform early childhood education.”

For more information or to register your interest in participating in Ford’s summer hearings, call Ford’s constituent service office at (773) 378-5902 or email workforce@lashawnford.com.

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