



Better Quality of Life

Making HIV Testing Easier

With new medications and expert medical care available to persons who have HIV, Rep. Ford realizes that more people in Illinois should have the opportunity to be tested for HIV. Providing care to more persons with HIV will help slow the spread of the disease. Past strategies were not finding the more than 10,000 persons in Illinois who have HIV but do not know it, which is why Rep. Ford worked with HIV/AIDS advocacy organizations and community groups to write legislation to make it easier and less intrusive for patients to be tested in health care settings such as doctors' offices while preserving the rights of those being tested. **SB 929 signed into law — Public Act 95-0007.**

Rep. Ford speaks at a press conference to urge more African Americans to donate blood.



Creating Job Opportunities

Ford believes that job opportunities should be available to all qualified citizens. Creating jobs strengthens families and communities, lowers crime rates and reduces the amount of money the state spends to support unemployed citizens. Understanding that ex-offenders struggle to find jobs, Rep. Ford delivered on his promise to constituents and passed House Bill 1332, which would require applicants for state jobs to no longer be asked if they have been convicted of a non-violent offense.

HB 1332 vetoed by the Governor, override planned by Rep. Ford.

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE *La Shawn K.* **FORD**



UPDATE



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State Representative
La Shawn K. Ford
8th District



Working Together for Better Schools

To help address the unique challenges facing our local schools, this spring Rep. Ford held an official House subcommittee hearing right in our community. Representatives from local schools, their Local School Councils, and many parents attended and used the opportunity to voice their concerns to elected officials. Rep. Ford will use the information gathered at the hearing to formulate a new community strategy as we work together for better schools.

Illinois ranks 49th in the country when it comes to state funding for public education, placing a greater reliance on property taxes. Rep. Ford voted to increase Illinois' commitment to public education by sending \$1.48 billion dollars to Chicago Public Schools and \$867 million to Cook County Schools for the 2007-08 school year, an increase of \$201 million over last year.

Rep. Ford also worked closely with local health care providers to partner them with schools in need of counseling, violence prevention and mediation programs. A first for schools in the 8th District, Ford's plan will allow trained counselors to calm situations that might otherwise result in violence or expulsion.



Rep. Ford is working with local youths to bring a new high school to the Austin community.



Property Tax Relief

Helping Keep Families in Their Homes

When a successful program that caps the percentage that property taxes can increase each year was about to expire, Rep. Ford worked with his colleagues to renew the popular "7 percent solution." Capping property tax increases at 7 percent per year, the program has helped countless families, especially senior citizens on fixed incomes, remain in their homes. House Bill 664, supported by Rep. Ford, extends the program for Chicago and Cook County families, if approved by the Board of Commissioners.

House Bill 664 amendatorily vetoed by Governor.

Foreclosure Prevention

Rep. Ford is also a strong advocate of crackdowns on predatory lenders who pressure or trick families into buying homes they cannot afford. Ford helped pass legislation that requires mortgage brokers to act in the best interest of homebuyers and creates a database to track predatory lending. Ford was also appointed to lead Congressman Danny K. Davis' Advisory Committee on Foreclosures.

Senate Bill 1167 sent to Governor.



Relief from Rising Electric Rates

Rep. Ford helped pass an electric utility reform package that includes \$1 billion worth of rebates for customers statewide.

Senate Bill 1592 signed into law, Public Act 94-0481.

FORD

FUTURE

FAMILIES

Dear Neighbors:

As the state official that is closest to our neighborhoods, it is important that the office of State Representative be in touch with the community. I spend many days in Springfield fighting for our needs, and still more back home working with various community groups and local officials to improve our quality of life.

This year we have seen some victories for local families in the form of property tax relief, electric rate relief, and an overhaul to our HIV testing methods that will encourage more people to learn their status. There are still more fights ahead, including a new high school for the Austin community, improvements to mental health care and efforts to fight childhood obesity, reforms to the way we treat ex-offenders, and progress towards a cleaner and healthier environment for our children.

Thank you for allowing me to serve our 8th District. If you ever have questions or need help accessing state services, please do not hesitate to call me at (773) 378-5902.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative – 8th District