



Biography of La Shawn K. Ford

“Brighter days are ahead of us all. I am passionate about building effective relationships as well as building bridges to success, meeting the needs of all.”
– La Shawn K. Ford

Personal Background

Born to an unwed teenage mother in the Cabrini-Green housing projects in Chicago, never knowing his father, and adopted by his grandmother at birth, La Shawn K. Ford started his life with few material advantages. When he was two, Ford’s family moved into a two-flat family building at LeClaire and Chicago Avenues in the Austin community on the West Side of Chicago. Through hard work, love, and tenacity, his family provided him a chance to attend the school across the street, Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Elementary School. They overcame further challenges when a fire gutted the family home when he was seven, causing Ford and other family members to live with relatives for some time on the South Side of Chicago in the Englewood community. Ford learned the value of hard work and made money for his family by shoveling snow, mowing lawns, collecting bottles and cans for recycling, and stocking produce in the local grocery store. Because of his drive to help people even at an early age, Ford was called “The Alderman” in the neighborhood. Incorporating the values taught by his church and school, and being a good student, Ford enrolled in another Catholic school, Weber High School. After high school, Ford became the first in his family to attend a four year college when he entered Niles College Seminary, and he contemplated becoming a priest. After a year, he entered Loyola University, where he played on the basketball team and earned a Bachelor of Science in Education with a minor in Political Science. For six years, Ford taught social studies to elementary school students and coached basketball in the Chicago Public Schools, and also worked as a Precinct Captain in the neighborhood where he grew up. As a licensed Real Estate Broker, he then decided to pursue his goal of opening his own business in real estate, and he achieved that goal by becoming the founder and owner of Ford Desired Real Estate, providing services to hundreds of clients since 2001. He is also an Illinois Licensed Insurance Agent and continues to be licensed as a teacher. He is the proud father of his daughter, Tia.

Political History and Philosophy

In 2006, campaigning on the theme, "Building Bridges to Success," Ford gained the opportunity to represent the people of the Eighth District in the Illinois House of Representatives. He was re-elected in 2008, in 2010, and in 2012. He was also elected to be a delegate to the 2012 Democratic National Convention. Representing a diverse district, which includes the West Side of Chicago and the suburbs of Oak Park, Berwyn, North Riverside, Forest Park, Proviso Township, Brookfield, La Grange Park, La Grange and Western Springs, Ford has seized the opportunity to work hard on issues important to his constituents and to all citizens of Illinois. Ford discusses issues with his constituents through his radio show on WVON 1690, "The Voice of the People", his cable TV show on CAN-TV Channel 21, town hall meetings, small group discussions in constituent homes, and other opportunities. Town Hall meetings have included: early childhood education; improving education in the Eighth District; the Eisenhower Expressway expansion and job opportunities through the Illinois Department of Transportation; legislation allowing the concealed carry of handguns (2 meetings); whether there should be an elected Chicago School Board (3 meetings); his bill proposing the decriminalization of small amounts of marijuana; issues particular to senior citizens; public safety issues; utilities; unemployment issues for youth, seniors, minorities, and disabled; support for small businesses; support for veterans; information about adoption and foster care; and decreasing the use of menthol cigarettes (with Chicago Department of Public Health).

Increasing social justice and addressing disparities are the common themes in his work, in areas such as jobs, education, health, increasing opportunities for ex-offenders, small business development, housing and veteran's affairs, and in the 96th General Assembly Ford authored and passed House Resolution 468 with bipartisan sponsorship urging that social justice be the guiding principle in decision-making in the House of Representatives. Ford takes seriously his vow to uphold the Constitution of the State of Illinois, which was established to "eliminate poverty and inequality; assure legal, social and economic justice; [and] provide opportunity for the fullest development of the individual."

Some Legislative and Community Accomplishments – 2007-present

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOBS

- Introduced legislation that was signed into law creating the African American Employment Plan Act to: (1) improve the delivery of State services to Illinois' African Americans; (2) increase the number of African Americans who are employed throughout State government and who are promoted; (3) assist State agencies in meeting goals established by the African American Employment Plan; and (4) establish an African American Employment Plan Advisory Council (Public Act 096-1341)
- Introduced the State Employment Application Act (Ban the Box) stipulating that an application for state employment may not ask if the applicant had been convicted of a non-violent criminal offense; introduced

in the 95th GA, passed bill through House and Senate, vetoed by the governor in 2007, veto not overridden; similar legislation introduced in the 96th, 97th and 98th General Assemblies; governor issued Administrative Order in May 2013 accomplishing the intent of the legislation.

- Introduced legislation that became law which gives returning citizens/ex-offenders the opportunity to seal criminal records for certain Class 3 and 4 non-violent offenses to expand job opportunities (Public Act 98-0142)
- Chaired hearing on Criminal Records Sealing Bill HB5723 and Ban the Box HB1210, August 2012
- Named Chair of the House Small Business Empowerment and Workforce Development (SBE-WD) Committee in the 97th and 98th General Assemblies
- Chaired SBE-WD Committee Meetings on Job Creation – July 2011 – more than 500 attended
- Introduced legislation which established the Small Business Empowerment and Workforce Development Task Force, with the President of the University of Illinois Board of Trustees as Chair (Public Act 98-0515)
- Sponsors yearly Career Fairs linking thousands of job seekers with potential employers; partnered with State of Illinois Central Management Services, Chicago Urban League, Malcolm X College and others to host thousands of job seekers and more than 80 employers/vendors
- Sponsored a Parent Resource Day and Career Fair at Michele Clark High School to offer resources for families looking for work and interested in helping their children in school
- Hosted a Town Hall meeting to discuss the Eisenhower Expressway expansion and job opportunities through the Illinois Department of Transportation
- Holds workshops to teach how to write successful grant applications
- Partnered with Bethel New Life to host workshop on How to Effectively Manage an Office
- Teams with YWCA to hold Workshops in Economic Empowerment, especially for women
- Organized Job Intake Fairs in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Employment Security at 5 Chicagoland locations for Vehicle Assembler jobs at Ford Motor Company, 2011
- Arranged buses and opportunity for more than 200 job seekers who took the bus with Rep. Ford or met him at the Thompson Center and learned how to test and apply for state or private jobs - February 2011
- Hosted Time for Xcellence event in August 2012 to link ex-offenders to community resources
- Panel Member on Town Hall Meeting on Teen Unemployment at 2013 College with Laura Washington, November 2011
- Held Workforce Development Labor Day Open House on August 30, 2013, Paul Simon Job Corps Center
- Sends daily Workforce Development emails with at least 20 pages of job leads to thousands of subscribers

IMPROVING HEALTH

A Leader in Legislation Related to HIV/AIDS

- Introduced landmark legislation that became law which makes it easier and less intrusive for patients to be routinely tested for HIV in health care settings while preserving the rights of those being tested (Public Act 095-0007)
- Introduced legislation that became law to update state statutes so the most up to date supplemental testing is done to confirm a preliminary positive HIV test (Public Act 097-0244)
- Introduced legislation that became law so all CD-4 counts and HIV viral loads are reported to the Illinois Department of Public Health to improve the care of patients with HIV (Public Act 097-0550)
- Introduced legislation that became law which protects the privacy of students who have HIV by repealing a 20 year old law which required public health departments to notify the principal if a student had HIV (Public Act 98-0353)
- Introduced and passed House Resolution 0065 (96th GA) urging the Department of Public Health to establish a comprehensive plan to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS by the year 2010
- Discussed public policy issues with experts at 2008 International AIDS Conference, Mexico City

A Leader in Improving Nutrition and Exercise

- Introduced legislation that became law establishing the Farmers' Market Technology Improvement Program Act, which helps people use their LINK cards (Food Stamps) at Farmers' Markets (Public Act 096-1088)
- Chief House Sponsor for successful legislation that amends the Local Food, Farms and Jobs Act to establish an electronic database to facilitate the purchase of fresh produce and food products by schools (Public Act 096-1095)
- Chief House Sponsor for legislation that became law requiring the State Board of Education to develop and maintain a nutrition and physical activity best practices database (Public Act 096-1223)
- Introduced legislation to ban trans fats in foods served by food facilities in 97th GA, passed the House, lost in the Senate; re-introduced in 98th GA (HB77) passed House, now in Senate
- Since 2008 for seven consecutive years on the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, has sponsored the Family Health Challenge honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for elementary and junior high students in efforts to combat childhood obesity – more than 400 students participate. Has been held in Chicago, Berwyn and Oak Park.
- Sponsors community health fairs in conjunction with Circle Family HealthCare Network, Concerned Organization Who Cares, and local aldermen
- Sponsored "What's Killing Us?" Community Health Fair during Black History Month in association with American Heart Association, Circle Family Health Care Network, Loretto Hospital, TACTS, Black Nurses

Association, American Cancer Society, ChildServ, Chicago Department of Health, and IDPH

- Promoted Healthy Eating as part of Black History Month at a local grocery store, Leamington Foods Member of Community Action Team for Healthier Kids (CATH-K), a coalition of 20 organizations working to decrease childhood obesity in Oak Park, River Forest, and Forest Park
- Speaker, "Update on LINK cards at Farmers Markets", Green Town 2011, Oak Park
- Active with Building a Healthier Chicago, promoting and participating in the Walk Across Austin, 2011
- Featured Panelist, Illinois Action for Children Community Forum on Childhood Obesity, 2011, Broadview
- In 2012 & 2013 sponsored Annual Heart and Sole Community 5K Family Run and Walk in August in Lafollette Park, Chicago, with Circle Family HealthCare Network and Austin Weekly News

Other Health-Related Legislation

- Chief House Sponsor for legislation that became law requiring the Department of Healthcare and Family Services to establish the Long Term Acute Care Hospital Quality Improvement Transfer Program, to improve quality in hospitals (Public Act 096-1130)
- Introduced legislation that became law establishing the Lupus Education and Awareness Program within the Illinois Department of Public Health (Public Act 096-1108)
- Founded the Lupus Legislative Caucus
- Leader in the successful fight to continue state funding to support University of Illinois-Chicago Sickle Cell Anemia Clinic
- Early in the debate about national health care reform, introduced and passed House Resolution 0565 (96th GA) urging the President and Congress to enact comprehensive health care reform
- Went to Washington, D.C. in July 2009 to lobby Illinois' congressional delegation to advance health care reform efforts
- Went to Atlanta in August 2013 to meet with other legislative leaders throughout the country on issues of healthcare in rural and underserved areas
- Sponsors blood drives in Chicago, Oak Park and Berwyn, partnering with LifeSource, St. Martin de Porres Church, the Southeast Oak Park Community Organization, and the Combined Veterans of Berwyn
- Sponsors Austin Holiday Food Drive, collecting 10,000 items for local food pantries in 2010
- Former Member, Board of Directors, Circle Family HealthCare Network Community Health Center, Chicago
- Member of the Governing Board, West Suburban Medical Center, Oak Park
- Named to the Cook County Health and Hospitals System African American Advisory Council, 2012

IMPROVING EDUCATION

Fighting for a Comprehensive Public High School in Austin

- Introduced idea in Austin Weekly News to locate new high school at Brach's location at Lake and Cicero, May 31, 2006, and June 1, 2006 and September 6, 2007
- Working with Austin Community Education Network for a new high school, was Keynote Speaker at the Austin Education Summit at Austin Town Hall, October 27, 2007
- Initiated efforts to place a referendum on the ballot urging the construction of a new comprehensive Austin High School

Improving the Quality of Education

- Introduced and passed House Resolution 0056 (96th GA) urging the State Board of Education to establish a comprehensive plan to close the student achievement gap by the 2010-2011 school year
- Chief House Sponsor of legislation that became law authorizing school districts to purchase electronic textbooks, instructional materials, and the technological equipment necessary to support the use of electronic textbooks from publishers and manufacturers (Public Act 96-1403)
- Introduced legislation that became law that provides for a remedial summer school program emphasizing reading and mathematics for students performing below grade level for two consecutive years (Public Act 097-0086)

Increasing Access to Early Childhood Education

- Chief House Sponsor of legislation that became law lowering the compulsory school age to 6 years, from 7 (Public Act 98-0544)

Improving Governance of Schools

- Hosted three Town Hall Meetings in 2012 to hear community views on whether the Chicago Public Schools School Board should be elected
- Introduced and passed legislation that became law which establishes a Chicago Educational Governance Task Force to study whether an elected Chicago Public Schools School Board would be the best structure of governance (Public Act 098-1053)
- Introduced bill in 97th GA to give merit pay to elected Local School Council members – did not advance

Increasing Fairness in Education

- Introduced legislation directing the State Board of Education to examine the impact and effectiveness of standardized testing (HB3163, 98th GA) – passed the House, now in the Senate
- Introduced legislation to assist victims of domestic or sexual violence complete their secondary school education (HB 2213, 98th GA)– passed the House, now in the Senate
- Introduced legislation establishing that certain lottery sales monies are redistributed to school districts based on the district's percentage of lottery sales (HB82, 98th GA)
- Introduced legislation directing the State Board of Education to establish a standard student expulsion policy (HB2880, 98th GA)

Hosting Town Hall Meetings on Issues in Education

- Hosted Town Hall meeting on Early Childhood Education in Berwyn
- Held Hearings of State of Illinois House of Representatives Sub-committee on Education in the Eighth District to improve education in the Eighth District – Chicago and Oak Park

- Chair of Subcommittee Hearing of the House Appropriations-Elementary and Secondary Education Committee at Bethel New Life
- Sponsor of Education Summits in Austin and Oak Park to discuss education improvement and funding
- Hosted public hearing on Renaissance 2010 at previous Austin High School
- Co-hosted Truancy Town Hall Meeting, April 2013

Promoting Opportunities for Students and Personal Civic Engagement

- Hosted more than 500 middle school students at Malcolm X College on February 1 to kick off Black History Month in a program called "College is an Option", to learn about programs at the City Colleges of Chicago, 2011 and 2012
- Principal for a Day at Spencer Math and Science Academy and at George Rogers Clark Elementary School
- Commencement Speaker, Michele Clark Academic Prep. High School
- Commencement Speaker, Paul Simon Job Corps Center
- Visited medical school in Cuba, September 2011
- Visited secondary schools in the United Kingdom, July 2012
- Previous Member, Board of Directors, Christ the King Jesuit College Preparatory High School, Austin
- Elected as Community Representative on the Local School Council (LSC) of George Rogers Clark Elementary School in the South Austin Community, 2014

PROMOTING SMALL BUSINESSES

- Introduced legislation that became law establishing a micro-loan program for qualified ex-offenders who are establishing their own businesses (Public Act 096-0656)
- Introduced legislation that became law providing that not less than 10% of state contracts be awarded to small businesses (Public Act 97-0307)
- Introduced legislation that became law establishing the Small Business Empowerment and Workforce Development Task Force, with the President of the University of Illinois Board of Trustees as Chair (Public Act 98-0515)
- Introduced and passed House Resolution 1652 (96th GA) urging Congress to establish a small business recession rescue task force
- Introduced House Resolution 0576 (96th GA) calling on Congress to support community banks that were greatly affected by the economic downturn but had not yet received any rescue funds
- Introduced legislation (HB3868 – 97th GA) better defining "small business" and "very small business" for the sake of procurement by the state of Illinois, and providing that not less than 1% of state contracts be awarded to very small businesses – did not advance
- Named Chair of the House Small Business Empowerment and Workforce Development Committee of the 97th and 98th General Assemblies
- Hosted, along with Chicagoland Foreign Investment Group, a Small Business Seminar on Funding and State Contracts for Small Businesses, December 2011, more than 100 attended

- Formed State Representative La Shawn K. Ford's Business Growth and Creation Committee, with the mission of promoting economic vitality, by providing advice, training, resources, and research to entrepreneurs and existing businesses, with the vision of increasing the number of strong small businesses and creating more job opportunities
- Attended and contributed at Jobs Summits convened by the National Association of State Legislatures: 2013 in Austin, Texas; 2014 in San Jose, California

SECURING HOUSING AND PREVENTING FORECLOSURES

- Introduced legislation that became law providing that a defaulting homeowner be notified by mail that they have the right to remain in their home for 30 days after the entry of the order of possession (Public Act 095-0826)
- Introduced legislation that became law requiring the name and contact information of the holder of foreclosed property be recorded and available to the public (Public Act 096-0110)
- Introduced legislation that became law making it illegal for condo associations to disapprove a sale of a condo unit if the buyer uses financing guaranteed by the FHA (Public Act 096-0228)
- Introduced legislation that became law increasing the penalties for anyone falsely posing as a landlord and obtaining rent or security deposits (Public Act 096-0496)
- In November 2008, introduced and passed House Resolution 1276 (96th GA) urging Congress to enact a 2-year moratorium on interest rate reset increases under sub-prime adjustable rate mortgage home loans
- Introduced resolution which was adopted urging the U.S. Congress to help prevent residential foreclosures (97th GA – HR 0045)
- Formed a Foreclosure Prevention Task Force for the West Side of Chicago and western suburbs, July 2011
- Sponsored Foreclosure Town Hall Meeting by being the Chair of Congressman Danny K. Davis' Advisory Committee on Foreclosures
- Moderator of Summit on the Foreclosure Crisis at Congressman Danny K Davis' State of the District Meeting
- Sponsor of Homeowner Outreach Days, Malcolm X College
- Is a leader in advocating for funding for affordable housing in Illinois

SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS AND VETERANS

- Introduced and passed House Resolution 0622 (95th GA) urging the U.S. Congress to pass legislation to allow free mailing of letters and packages to combat troops
- Joined to support the Combined Veterans of Berwyn and spoke at Flag Day celebration, Proska Park, Berwyn
- Named Veteran and Illinois Army National Guard Sgt. Jonathan Tate as his District Community and Veterans Outreach Coordinator
- Held coffee in Oak Park in September 2013 bringing together service providers and veterans
- Awarded Patriotic Employer Award from the Illinois Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), an office of the

Department of Defense, in recognition of his extraordinary support of a member of his staff who is serving in the Illinois Army National Guard

SAFEGUARDING OUR ENVIRONMENT

- Sponsored legislation (HB6342 – 95th GA) providing tax credits for those who use mass transit
- Sponsored legislation that became law that increases energy conservation in State of Illinois buildings (Public Act 95-0104)
- Teamed with Bethel New Life to host a CEDA Energy Fair to spread information about energy conservation and reducing heating bills
- Leader in the fight to declare those areas affected by the July 2010 floods as disaster areas, and assisted residents to apply for aid by teaming with schools to open their computer labs to the public

ADDRESSING THE BUDGET DEFICIT

- Introduced House Joint Resolution 0083 (96th GA) establishing the State Financial Crisis Task Force within the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to address means of cutting costs and obtaining more revenue

INCREASING PUBLIC SAFETY AND DECREASING VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

- In follow-up to public discussion and two Town Hall meetings in Summer 2011, introduced and passed HR 550 (97th GA) establishing the Firearm Public Awareness Task Force, charged with analyzing data from other states with concealed carry laws and examining other firearm-related public safety issues in Illinois, chairing two Task Force meetings in Spring 2012
- Introduced legislation which has established the Violence Prevention Task Force, with the Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health as Chair (Public Act 98-0194)
- Introduced legislation that became law prohibiting tinted front windshields and front side windows on cars (Public Act 096-0530)
- Introduced legislation to ensure that children and youth who are parents, expectant parents, or the victims of domestic or sexual violence are identified by schools in a manner respectful of their privacy and safety; treated with dignity and regard; and provided the protection, instruction, and related support services necessary to enable them to meet State educational standards and successfully attain a high school diploma (HB2213 – 98th GA – passed the House, now in the Senate)
- Proposed using the Illinois National Guard to work with other law enforcement agencies to combat violence in Chicago
- Proposed increased funding for police in high violence areas (HR1208-96th GA)
- Introduced legislation to create a “Scratch Out Crime” lottery ticket to fund the hiring of more police (HB79, 98th GA)
- Hosted Town Hall meeting Violence: Black in America, August 2012
- Hosted Summit on Violence Prevention at John Hay Community Academy in Chicago

- Organized and hosted First Day of Summer Day of Mourning to honor children who had died in the community, and works with community groups to reduce gun violence

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF COMMUNITY LIFE

- Authored legislation that became law creating the Right to Privacy in the Workplace Act, which makes it unlawful for any employer to ask any prospective employee to provide any user name, password or other related account information in order to gain access to a social networking website where that prospective employee maintains an account or profile (Public Act 097-0875)
- Authored legislation that became law creating the Right to Privacy in the School Setting Act, which makes it unlawful for school officials to request or obtain from their students their social media passwords unless there is reasonable cause to believe that a student's account on a social networking website contains evidence that the student has violated a school disciplinary rule or policy (Public Act 098-0129)
- Sponsored legislation that became law that established the Council on Responsible Fatherhood, which aims to support fathers and help them to become more responsible (Public Act 095-0960)
- Named to the Illinois Council on Responsible Fatherhood, April 2012
- Chief House Sponsor of legislation that became law amending the Illinois Parentage Act so paternity testing is done using the most modern DNA testing methods (Public Act 096-1074)
- Authored and passed House Resolution designating November 13, 2014 as Random Acts of Kindness Day in Illinois (House Resolution 0900 - 98th GA)
- Urged the City of Chicago to place a moratorium on red light cameras, August 2014
- Held Town Hall Meeting on Adoption and Foster Care, August 2013
- Member, Board of Directors, Peace Corner, an after-school center for youth in Austin
- Supporter for the completion of Maze Library, Oak Park
- Partnered with Weinstein Meats and Gusto Packing to provide more than 500 Christmas Gifts at Leland Elementary School, December 15, 2011
- Hosted and arranged for more than 400 guests who saw a free community screening of the movie "Red Tails" – February 2012
- Hosted and arranged for more than 200 guests who saw a reduced rate community screening of the movie "The Butler" – September 2013 guests
- Founding Committee Chairman in 2014 of Illinois State Troop 606 of the Boy Scouts for boys on the West Side of Chicago
- Co-Sponsor of Annual Back-To-School Throwdown, a musical celebration in Columbus Park, Chicago

ADVANCING CITIZENSHIP, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

A Leader in Issued affecting Returning Citizens/Ex-Offenders

- Introduced the State Employment Application Act (Ban the Box) stipulating that an application for state employment may not ask if the

applicant had been convicted of a non-violent criminal offense; introduced in the 95th GA, passed bill through House and Senate, vetoed by the governor in 2007, veto not overridden; similar legislation introduced in the 96th, 97th and 98th General Assemblies; governor signed Administrative Order on October 3, 2013 accomplishing the intent of the legislation.

- Introduced legislation that became law which gives returning citizens/ex-offenders the opportunity to seal criminal records for certain Class 3 and 4 non-violent offenses to expand job opportunities (Public Act 98-0142)
- Introduced legislation suspending child support payments for those who are incarcerated, lost in the House (HB2330, 98th GA)
- Introduced legislation to delete the provision that the period of probation for a minor who is found to be guilty for an offense which is a forcible felony, other than first degree murder or a Class X felony, shall be at least 5 years (HB 3224, 98th GA) – lost in the House
- Introduced legislation so a person's obligation to pay child support pursuant to a court or administrative order is suspended by operation of law during any period that the person is committed to the custody of the Department of Corrections or the Department of Juvenile Justice (HB 2330, 98th GA) – lost in the House
- Introduced House Resolution urging the Governor and the Department of Corrections to discourage prosecutors from recommending and judges from sentencing low level drug offenders to the county jail or the Department of Corrections and to do everything in their power to have low level drug offenders currently serving sentences in Department of Corrections facilities released to home confinement (HR1069, 98th GA) – lost in the House
- Chaired hearings in August 2012 and April 2013 and Town Hall Meeting in March 2013 on Criminal Records Sealing Bill HB5723 and Ban the Box HB1210, both which have become law
- Organized and hosted A Second Chance Summit at UIC Forum in September 2013 attended by hundreds interested in learning how to seal their records according to Public Act 98-0142

A Leader in Social Justice Issues

- Authored and passed House Resolution 468 (96th GA) with bipartisan sponsorship urging that social justice be the guiding principle in decision making in the House of Representatives
- Authored and passed House Resolution 95 (98th GA) with 108 votes which creates the Distressed Counties and Communities Task Force to find and create innovative means to address and meet the numerous needs of those who receive State social services and develop a legislative and administrative agenda that can serve as a national model for developing a successful anti-poverty agenda
- Introduced and passed House Resolution 48 (98th GA) which urges the Governor to create a commission to confront the economic problems that still plague African-American communities
- Introduced and passed House Resolution HR 0909 (95th GA) which urges Congress to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to make all its provisions permanent

- Chief House Co-Sponsor of legislation that became law creating the Racial and Ethnic Impact Research Task Force to determine a practical method for the standardized collection and analysis of data on the racial and ethnic identity of arrestees by State and local law enforcement agencies (Public Act 097-0433)
- Chief House Sponsor of legislation that became law as the Criminal Identification Act that requires ethnic and racial data be gathered at many points when a person encounters the criminal justice system (Public Act 098-0528)

A Leader in Civic Issues

- Introduced successful legislation stating the State of Illinois ratifies the agreement among the states to elect the President by National Popular Vote, to ensure that the candidate with the most votes is elected President of the United States (Public Act 095-0714)
- Introduced successful legislation designating each March 25 as the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade (Public Act 096-0930)
- Introduced a House Resolution calling for an amendment to the State constitution stating that no voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure related to voting, shall be imposed or applied by the State or any political subdivision in a manner which results in a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen of the State to vote on account of sex, sexual orientation, race, color, or status as a member of a language minority. (HJRCA0039, 98th GA – tabled – see HJRCA0052 below)
- Chief Co-Sponsor of House Joint Resolution which passed both Houses which proposes to amend the Suffrage and Elections Article of the Constitution and provides that no person shall be denied the right to register to vote or to cast a ballot in an election based on race, color, ethnicity, status as a member of a language minority, sex, sexual orientation, income, national origin or religion. (HJRCA0052, 98th GA)
- Introduced and passed House Joint Resolution 0089 through both Houses which designates the portion of Cicero Avenue, beginning at Roosevelt Road and ending at West Grand Avenue in Chicago, Illinois, as Mandela Road in honor of Nelson Mandela; dedication of Mandela Road with signage in place on July 18, 2014, Nelson Mandela’s birthday (HJR 0089, 98th GA)
- Introduced the Prisoner Census Adjustment Act in the 97th GA and again in the 98th GA (HB 62) proposing that for purposes of creating election districts and redistricting, requires that State and local governmental bodies use census figures adjusted to reflect the pre-incarceration addresses of persons imprisoned in State or federal facilities in Illinois; has passed the House, now in the Senate
- Introduced House Resolution (HR 0610 – 97th GA) urging support for the peaceful exercise of First Amendment rights by Occupy protesters – resolution lost on a House vote
- Conducted Redistricting Bootcamp as legislative boundaries were redrawn based on the 2010 Census, working with the Lawndale Alliance, other community-based organizations and other elected officials

- Hosted (in 2011 and 2012) more than 500 middle school students at Malcolm X College on February 1 to kick off Black History Month in a program called College is an Option, to learn about programs at the City Colleges of Chicago
- Panel Member, Loyola Youth Summit, June 2012
- Speaker at Berwyn Flag Day Celebration
- Parade Marshal and Speaker at 4th of July Parade, North Riverside

Legislative Committees

As Illinois State Representative, Ford is currently Chair of the Small Business Empowerment and Workforce Development Committee and Chair of the Restorative Justice Committee. He is currently a member of the House Committees on Appropriations-Human Services; Health Care Availability Access (Vice-Chairperson); Health Care Licenses; Tollway Oversight (Vice-Chairperson); and Veterans' Affairs. Ford has been the Chair of the Foreclosure Subcommittee and also the Chair of the Eighth District Education Oversight Subcommittee. Ford has had assignments in the Illinois House of Representatives Committees of Adoption Reform, Appropriations for Elementary and Secondary Education, Computer Technology, Disparities in Educational Achievement, Elections and Campaign Reform, Local Government, Pension Funds Management, Access to Federal Funding, Finance, Insurance, Juvenile Justice Reform, Revenue and Finance, Youth and Family, Health and Healthcare Disparities, Health Exchanges Subcommittee, Higher Education, Housing, Insurance, Tollway Oversight, Tourism and Conventions, and Veterans' Affairs.. Ford is also the Chair of the House Democratic Task Force to Increase State Government Business Opportunities for Minority-Owned Enterprises and Small Businesses, and is a member of the Bipartisan Task Force to Promote Economic and Workforce Development.

Community Service and Boards of Directors

Ford follows his natural instincts to get involved and is a leader in community affairs to create environments where organizations and communities can become more vibrant. He serves on many Boards of Directors, including the Austin Chamber of Commerce, the Advisory Board for a Children's Museum in Austin, Peace Corner, Loretto Hospital, Fathers Who Care, the External Advisory Board for Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC), and the Governing Board of West Suburban Medical Center.

Awards and Recognition

Ford has received numerous awards for his work in the Eighth District. Recognition of his contributions including:

- Austin Business Owner of the Year Award
- Archdiocese of Chicago "Christifideles" and "Augustus Tolton" awards

- Chicago Association of Realtors "Outstanding Achievement" and "Excellence in Performance" awards
- "Outstanding Community Service" Certificate awarded by State Senator Don Harmon in collaboration with the Changing a Generation Foundation
- Certificate of Appreciation from the Austin Community South Austin Coalition
- Certificate of Appreciation from Ashunti Residential Management System Inc.
- Honors from the Youth Connection Charter School
- The Vernon Jarrett Legislative Award from Dearborn Realist Board
- The Legendary Leaders Award from Circle Family Healthcare Network
- Special Honors from Child Serv
- Austin Senior Leadership Class Award
- Principal for a Day at Spencer Math and Science Academy and George Rogers Clark Elementary School
- Safer Foundation Carre Visionary Award
- Illinois Farm Bureau Activator Friend of Agriculture award
- Austin Community Academy High School Black History Month Career Day award
- Illinois Council on Economic Education Certificate of Appreciation
- Quality Care Champion Award from SEIU Local 880
- 2008 Fleur-de-lis Program Service Award for Advocacy & Awareness presented by the Lupus Foundation of America-Illinois Chapter, Inc
- One of Chicago's Top 40 Game Changers in 2010 by the Urban Business Roundtable
- 2010 Friend of Agriculture Award from the Illinois Agricultural Association and the Illinois Farm Bureau
- 2010 Legislator of the Year by Thrive Counseling Center, Oak Park
- 2011 Small Business Advocate Award by Small Business Advocacy Council
- 2011 Award of Recognition for Expanding Opportunities for Employment from the Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities
- 2012 Legislator of the Year, Illinois Department of Human Rights and Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities
- 2012 Outstanding Legislator Award, Chicago Westside Branch, NAACP
- 2012 Wal-Mart West Side Community Builders Award for Outstanding Public Service
- 2012 "Saving Lives" Legislative Award, from the Illinois Consortium on Drug Policy and the Institute for Metropolitan Affairs, Roosevelt University
- Millennium Builder's Award 2012 from the Suburban Minority Contractors Association of the greater Chicago Area
- Special Award of 2012 from Circle Family HealthCare Network
- Etiquette Foundation of Illinois Distinguished Service Award, Political Leader of 2012
- Community Renewal Society Public Servant Lighthouse Award, 2013
- Westside Health Authority Every Block A Village 2014 Legacy Award

- Illinois State Alliance of YMCAs - 2014 Legislative Hero Award
- Generation Moms 2014 Impact Award
- L.E.A.D.E.R.'s Network (Leaders for Empowerment, Advocacy, and Disaster Relief Network) Award, 2014
- Patriotic Employer Award from the Illinois Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), an office of the Department of Defense, in recognition of his extraordinary support of a member of his staff
- Honor of Recognition at Simeon Career Academy High School Blue and Gold Extravaganza for work done to the save the Electrical Training Program at Simeon High School, 2014

For more information, please visit www.lashawnford.com. 2014-11-29