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FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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For More Information:
State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford
773-378-5902

Ford Introduces Bill to Help Keep Troubled Youth Home with their Families

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – In efforts decrease recidivism in Juvenile Justice Facilities and help at-risk youth, state Rep. La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, filed legislation to allow courts to consider home confinement or alternative sentencing in lieu of detention centers.

“As chair of the House Restorative Justice Committee, I am fighting to make sure that we are acting in the best interest of our youth,” Ford said. “We need to find alternative solutions to locking our children in jails, and provide them with the necessary resources to become contributing citizens instead of career criminals.”

To reduce recidivism and provide a more constructive and solution-based justice system, House Bill 3743 allows the court to first consider home confinement or an alternative sentence to incarceration in a detention center or confinement in a juvenile detention home when a minor is found guilty of a non-violent crime. The legislation also provides more options for rehabilitation of young offenders, by allowing a judge to convene a conference with parents or legal guardians, law enforcement officials, and representatives from various state agencies including the Department of Children and Family Services and the Department of Juvenile Justice to make recommendations for an alternative sentence.

“Although these individuals have committed crimes, they are still children and we have a responsibility to help them mature and become responsible adults,” Ford said. “Families should be involved in determining what tools they need to help children avoid destructive behavior. After meeting with Dir. Arthur Bishop from the Department of Juvenile Justice and youth advocates, it is clear that change is needed. The Department of Juvenile Justice spends \$100,000 per person in detention centers, and still lacks the resources to carry out their mission. This legislation can help provide long-term solutions, address unique circumstances for each individual and improve access to education and support services. If we are serious about rehabilitation we must meet their needs and prioritize spending.”

For more information, contact one of Ford’s constituent service offices: 816 S. Oak Park Ave. in Oak Park at 708-445-3673, 4800 W. Chicago Ave. in Chicago at 773-378-5902 or in the Stratton Office Building in Springfield at 217-782-5962.

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