



News...

from State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 5, 2017

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford
773-378-5902

Ford Bill to Allow Immediate Record Sealing Passes House

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, recently passed a measure that will allow for immediate sealing of eligible acquitted and dismissed charges of individuals as a means to help provide more employment and education opportunities.

At a press conference hosted by Fr. Tom Walsh, Pastor of St. Martin de Porres Church in Austin, Fr. Walsh said, “Every day, people who have been arrested and either spend time at Cook County Jail or are out on bond are found innocent of all the charges brought against them. Many people are arrested who did not commit the crime they are accused of, and eventually a judge or jury finds them innocent. Unfortunately, these charges will remain on their record. As a result, when they apply for a job or if their current employer looks at their record, they will find that these charges still on their record even if they have been found innocent. In order to get these charges removed from their records, there is a long process which involves fees which penalizes a person who is indeed innocent of the crime they were charged with. This practice is wrong, and it creates a barrier for many people who are law-abiding citizens who are trying to support themselves and their families and lead honest lives – this situation affects many people who live within our community.”

Ford is the sponsor of House Bill 514, a measure that would allow for individuals to immediately seal records of criminal charges if those charges are acquitted or dismissed with prejudice. If it becomes law, the bill will streamline a complicated process that costs money and may take months to be effective to a much simpler process. Instead of having to file for sealing, paying fees and having to re-appear in courts, an acquitted individual could petition the court and be granted sealing in the same hearing that resolved the criminal case.

“The tide is turning in America, and the arc of the moral universe is bending a little closer towards justice,” said Ford. “When we have leaders like Clerk Dorothy Brown and Congressman Danny K. Davis working together to help pass legislation in Springfield, criminal justice reform is a little bit easier as we start by correcting flaws in our justice system. This bill is a simple bill, and it corrects an unjust practice. It is great to work with Clerk Brown who saw the need for this legislation.”

Ford represents the 8th Representative District, which contains parts of Chicago’s Austin neighborhood and portions of Berwyn, Brookfield, Forest Park, La Grange, North Riverside and Oak Park. For more information, please contact Rep. Ford’s District Office at 773-378-5902, 708-445-3673 or visit www.LaShawnFord.com.

###