

News...



from State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford
773-378-5902

Ford Calls for Audit of DCFS Following Death of Joliet Toddler

CHICAGO – Following the unsettling news of the death of 16-month old Semaj Crosby in her Joliet home, state Rep. La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, has spearheaded a measure calling for an audit of the Department of Children and Family Services and its efforts to investigate abuse and neglect in the community.

“Any death in the community is disheartening, but I can’t sit on the sidelines when a defenseless child loses her life and something could have been done to prevent it,” said Ford. “Our state agencies are here for one reason; to help our families and communities. This family was visited many times, including the day before we lost Semaj, and we need to know how the department was conducting their investigations and what aid was being provided to her and her family.”

Ford is the sponsor of House Resolution 418, a measure that calls for the Auditor General to conduct a performance audit on the Department of Children and Family Services to review and assess the Department’s protocols for investigating reports of abuse and neglect. In the 12 months before the death of Semaj Crosby, DCFS had 11 investigations into her household, none of which were deemed substantial enough to remove the 16-month old or her siblings from the home. The day before Semaj was found, the household was visited by DCFS. About two-and-a-half hours after the visit, the toddler disappeared, prompting a massive search of the subdivision near Joliet.

“We have to do our part in ensuring that all reports of child abuse and neglect are thoroughly investigated and that the children of our state have access to adequate and efficient protective programs,” said Ford. “How many more children in preventable situations are being missed by DCFS? The fact remains that one is already too many. My heart goes out to Semaj’s family, and even though there is nothing we can do for them now, I hope that this audit will bring light to some practices and keep our children safe in the future.”

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.