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FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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## **Ford Urges Governor to Restore Funding Slashed from Illinois' Education Budget**

**CHICAGO** – State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) is urging Governor Pat Quinn to use the discretionary spending authority granted to him by the legislature to restore the \$146 million in funding cut by the Illinois State Board of Education on Tuesday. Programs affected include early childhood education and after-school initiatives that help keep kids off the streets.

“The programs that were cut or eliminated by the State Board of Education on Tuesday are vitally important not only to the children, but to the communities I represent as a whole,” Ford said. “Helping kids get an early start on their schooling and providing after-school alternatives are gains that we cannot afford to erase.”

On Tuesday, the Illinois State Board of Education met in an emergency session to allocate available revenues, which due to the floundering economy, were not enough to fully fund programs at their previous levels. In all, \$475 million in cuts were approved, but thanks to an increase in the per-pupil foundation level approved by the legislature, the net amount of the cuts was \$146 million. Because the increased foundation level funds go directly to schools, many programs run by the State Board of Education or outside organizations were slashed.

Among the most serious cuts identified by Rep. Ford is a \$123 million reduction (32.4 percent) to the early childhood program, which could result in 30,000 Illinois children losing preschool services and a widening of the education disparity between rich and poor school districts. Also cut were an entire line item of \$9.7 million for after-school programs and a 33 percent cut to the Alternative Learning/Regional Safe Schools program.

“Parents who work depend on these programs to help them earn a living and provide the type of education that meets the specific needs of the communities I represent,” Ford said. “With the rash of recent shootings in the Austin community, it’s now more important than ever to find and cut wasteful spending so that we can save the programs that our most vulnerable residents rely on. I hope the governor sees to it that some or all of these funds are restored.”

For more information, please contact Rep. Ford’s constituent service office at (773) 378-5902.

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