

News...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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Two Ford Measures to Turn Illinois' Housing Market towards Recovery Signed Into Law

CHICAGO – State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) on Thursday commended Governor Pat Quinn for signing into law two measures authored by Ford to help condominium owners more easily sell their units and make it easier to hold those who own vacant property responsible for upkeep and maintenance.

Ford's House Bill 155 prohibits condominium associations from blocking the sale of a condo unit through right of refusal, option to purchase, or any other method solely on the fact that the buyer of the unit is planning to use a Federal Housing Authority (FHA) loan. The FHA typically refuses to offer financing for condo units that have refusal rights, limiting the options available for interested buyers and making it harder to sell units. Ford's legislation is part of ongoing discussions he and others are having with the FHA to convince them to change their rules and approve more loans for condos.

"When you have two bureaucracies like the FHA and a condo association that often have a mutual interest in not dealing with each other, that makes it harder for the seller who may be trying to use the sale to avoid foreclosure, and it makes it impossible for buyers who want to use an FHA loan to buy a condo in an association that has the refusal rights," Ford said.

"Representative Ford really has his finger on the pulse of what's going on in the real world," said Greg St. Aubin, Director of Governmental Affairs for the Illinois Association of REALTORS®. "He understood very early on what a significant problem that HUD's long-standing prohibition on 'right of first refusal' clauses would cause with the growing share of the market being in FHA loans."

Also signed into law recently was Ford's House Bill 153, which requires that in cases of foreclosure or consent foreclosure, any deed executed must contain valid contact information, including a phone number, for the new mortgagee or grantee (typically a bank). Ford introduced this legislation to address the problem of vacant properties with

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owners who do not keep up on maintenance or take measures to ensure the property is safe. Now that Ford's legislation is law, neighborhood residents will be able to easily use the deed to obtain the owner's name, street address, and telephone number.

"When a bank or investor takes a property from a struggling homeowner and fails to maintain it, property values of the neighbors fall even further, making it harder for others to sell their homes," Ford said. "Very few people want to move into a neighborhood full of vacant and dangerous properties, and hopefully this law will help concerned neighbors hold these owners accountable to the same standards they are held to."

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

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