

# Press Release



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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**For More Information:**

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## **Rep. Ford Preparing for Gov. Quinn's State of the State Address**

*Hopes for a Fair Plan to Help the Eighth District and all of Illinois*

**CHICAGO** – State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) is preparing for Gov. Quinn's State of the State address, which will be delivered February 1, 2012. With Governor Quinn saying "The number one challenge for Illinois is job creation," and a state unemployment rate at 9.8%, (more than 1% higher than the national average), Quinn's address comes at a critical time for Illinois.

Ford agrees with Governor Quinn, and he hopes that the Governor listens to his own mantra that "Jobs follow brain power." Article 10 of the Illinois Constitution states: "A fundamental goal of the People of the State is the educational development of all persons to the limits of their capacities. The State shall provide for an efficient system of high quality public educational institutions and services. Education in public schools through the secondary level shall be free."

In anticipation of the speech, Rep. Ford released the following statement:

"Given what the Illinois Constitution clearly lays out, Gov. Quinn's speech should start with education fairness. A great way to demonstrate this would be a partnership with the Chicago Public Schools for a traditional high school for the Austin community, the largest community in Chicago.

"I hope to hear a plan to bring fairness to our system of educational funding for Illinois' public schools, a system with failing schools and increasing numbers of students falling short of meeting the needs of our highly-technical society. Illinois has so much to offer: it is the home of Presidents of the United States. Illinois has great institutes of higher learning to help create new generations of inventors. Illinois has great rail, air, water, and highway transportation systems to help businesses get products to market; successful businesses help our state thrive. Illinois has great urban and rural communities, with so much to offer tourists and new companies that move to our state, with a side benefit of helping to generate revenue for our state.

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“We have a growing population in need of safety net programs in every community across the state. The recent closure of the Hull House should send an urgent message that Illinois must move in a new direction to get the state working to meet the needs of those who need help, to figure out a way to protect human service programs like Hull House. Because we haven’t figured out this problem, our safety net programs are being cut and agencies are closing.

“Agencies like Safer Foundation and A Safe Haven are vital to our communities and the people they serve, but programs are being taken away from our communities, leaving the state carrying a heavier burden in the long run.

“Our Medicaid program needs to be addressed. Working with the Federal government in the waiver process and attacking Medicaid fraud are vital to controlling costs, but we must not neglect truly eligible citizens who absolutely need Medicaid to cover their health care costs.

“Illinois is experiencing a budget crisis that is one of the worst in the State's long history. The financial condition of the State is affecting individuals, families, social service providers and their clients, as well as state employees, units of local governments, educational institutions, businesses and other enterprises, large and small. In some cases, the state's financial condition is leaving those impacted without any avenue for relief. This is why I proposed, and the House adopted, HJR 83, which establishes the State Financial Crisis Task Force to address means of cutting costs and obtaining more revenue by examining ideas contributed by the private sector and by any persons who are committed to improving our great state of Illinois.

“If we are going to put an end to the pension crisis, failing schools, unemployment, and the increasing growth of poverty in Illinois, I urge the Governor to pivot and say that he needs each of the legislators and the 12.8 million citizens of Illinois – Democrats, Republicans and Independents – to join him as he moves Illinois to a new level of hope and change, so that Illinois can be an example and a desired place for new businesses and new residents. We need to get past the partisan fighting that solves nothing and wastes time and money, and get down to implementing solutions that work.

“In the end, I am hoping to hear a plan from Governor Quinn that will put Illinois on fast track to recovery.”

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

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