



June 19, 2019

Let's Call Our Governor and Mayor to Get Resources for the West Side!

I recently held a meeting in Austin with many West Side community leaders and stakeholders entitled "Stand Up and Demand Resources". We came together to call attention to Austin, the second largest community area in Chicago, and to bring to light once again that it is really in a state of emergency. The West Side has a Black unemployment rate of 21%. People on the West Side of Chicago have life expectancies 20 years shorter than those living in downtown Chicago. We need to continue to bring to light the crucial need for economic development, high quality schools, safer communities, healthier communities, construction training and jobs, and the need for respect that the West Side truly deserves.

Illinois will have new revenue coming in from sports betting, expanded casinos, taxing recreational marijuana, an increased gas tax, an increase in the driver's registration fee, and an increased cigarette tax. With a \$40 billion spending budget and a \$45 billion capital bill for infrastructure improvement and construction, there are no more excuses for not investing in and building up Austin and the West Side.

At the meeting, I emphasized that change happens when people demand change. That's how changes happened with civil rights, women's rights, marriage equality, and so many other issues in our democracy. But, it requires that "We, the People" stand up for what we need and what we deserve. We need to continue to fight for the safety and prosperity of families on the West Side of Chicago.

Therefore, we decided at the meeting that we all should sign a West Side State of Emergency Commitment and also immediately call Governor Pritzker and Mayor Lightfoot to demand: economic development, high quality schools, safer communities, healthier communities, construction training and jobs, and respect for the West Side of Chicago.

Governor JB Pritzker's phone number is 217-782-6830 or 6831, and Mayor Lori Lightfoot's phone number is 312-744-3300. Let's call and continue the fight – let's demand change NOW!

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District