



October 14, 2020

Early Voting Starts Near You!

On October 14, 1964, 56 years ago this week, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1964, the civil rights movement achieved two of its greatest successes: the ratification of the 24th Amendment, which abolished the poll tax, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited racial discrimination in employment and education and outlawed racial segregation in public facilities. In October of that year, King was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work to accomplish these goals and to promote peace. He donated the prize money, valued at \$54,600, to the civil rights movement, according to history.com. Throughout our history, there have been so many challenges to prevent people from voting at the polls, and these obstructions continue to the present day, but Dr. King can be our inspiration to fight on.

On October 14, 2020, early voting in Chicago became available in all 50 wards. According to the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners, for the November 3 General Election, Chicago voters may use any Early Voting & Registration location in the city: at the Loop Super Site at 191 N. Clark St., and then starting from October 14, at the 50 Ward sites. Chicago voters may use any Early Voting location in the city.

Any ballots that voters cast in Early Voting are final. After casting ballots in Early Voting, voters may not return to amend, change or undo a ballot for any reason. It is a felony to vote more than once -- or to attempt to vote more than once -- in the same election. Government-issued photo ID is not required but is helpful if there is a question about the voter's registration, address, signature or if there are two voters at the same address with the same names or similar names. Registration services are available at every Early Voting site. Two forms of ID, one of which shows the voter's current address, are needed to register for the first time or to file a name change or an address update.

What about Vote by Mail? In March 2019, even before the coronavirus pandemic, I introduced legislation that authorized voters to have access to a vote by mail ballot for the 2020 elections, and a version of that legislation became law. Many, many people have requested and have already received a Vote By Mail ballot.

What if you don't want to mail your ballot? Well, you can drop off your Vote By Mail ballot at a secure lock box at any Chicago early voting site. According to the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners, due to COVID-19, voters are encouraged to use Vote By Mail or Early Voting before Election Day on November 3, 2020. Secured Drop Boxes will be available at every Early Voting site for any Chicago Vote By Mail voter to submit the signed and sealed Ballot Return Envelope. Every voter is encouraged to wear a facemask that covers the mouth and nose, whether visiting to use in-person Early Voting or to use a Secured Drop Box. Voters in line must practice social distancing with 6 feet of space between persons in line.

West Side Early Voting locations where you can vote early or submit your Vote By Mail Ballot to a secure drop Box include: Herzl Elementary School, 3711 W. Douglas Blvd; Suder Elementary School, 2022 W. Washington Blvd; Westside Learning Center, 4624 W. Madison St.; Burbank Elementary School, 2035 N. Mobile Ave.; Hanson Park Elementary School, 5411 W. Fullerton Ave.; and McNair Elementary School, 4820 W. Walton St. Hours are Monday-Friday: 8:30 a.m. – 7 p.m. and Saturday-Sunday: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Election day hours on November 3, 2020 are 6 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Let's all celebrate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and vote!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'La Shawn K. Ford'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'L' and a long, horizontal stroke that tapers to a point on the right.

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District