



November 4, 2020

Kim Foxx Wins

Kim Foxx has been re-elected as our Cook County State's Attorney for a second term. Her re-election is not only good for Cook County, but the win is a victory for the conscience of a fair criminal justice system. Her re-election is a strong message that Cook County wants to turn the page on wrongful convictions and prosecutorial misconduct.

Kim Foxx stated, "I'm running for re-election for State's Attorney because I want to fight every single day to continue the important work of reforming justice and making a fairer, safer system for Cook County."

It's time for Illinois to take a stand and eliminate the racist politics and policies that put so many citizens' fate in the hands of police and prosecutors. State's Attorney Kim Foxx should continue her mission to lock up dangerous and violent criminals and divert non-violent offenders to the help they need. Springfield, Cook County, and Chicago must work with Kim Foxx to meet the needs of the nonviolent offenders.

Our policies must give ex-offenders a path to success in the mainstream economy. We need police reform to prevent cases from going to the State's Attorney in the first place. We need to have support and treatment for those who struggle with substance use disorders and mental health issues.

According to Mother Jones, "Chicago's Cook County Jail is the biggest single-site jail in the United States. It's also one of the biggest mental health care providers in the country. About a third of the jail's 6,000 or so inmates have been diagnosed with a mental illness, and many of them were sent to the facility after the state reduced funding for hospitals and community caseworkers during the economic recession. Between 2009 and 2012, Illinois slashed \$113.7 million from its budget for mental health services, causing at least two state-operated inpatient facilities and six Chicago clinics to close. Two-thirds of nonprofit agencies that offer mental health care in the state say they've had to cut back on their programs. With fewer services available, more people struggling with psychosis have been pushed into the streets. Most of those who are now housed in the jail were brought in on charges of nonviolent crimes. Compared with healthy detainees, it can cost three times as much to jail someone with a mental illness."

Chicagobond.org gives another perspective: "Cook County Jail is not the largest mental health care provider in the US. It is a place where people with mental health needs who have been criminalized are incarcerated. People need resources, not incarceration. Meaningful mental health care can't happen inside a cage. Shame on the media for continuing to peddle this narrative, which allows jailers to reshape incarceration as a form of care or a service."

Of course, this is a racial equity issue. According to Cook County Sheriff reports, of those in confinement, 73% are Black, 17% are Latino, and 9% are White.

As Ibram X. Kendi states, we need to “Admit racial inequity is a problem of bad policy, not bad people.” I look forward to working with re-elected Cook County State’s Attorney Kim Foxx to establish policies that push our criminal justice system toward more fairness and equity for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LSK', with a stylized flourish at the end.

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District