



News from the Illinois House of Representatives

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Contact:
Leader Willis, repwillis77@gmail.com
Rep. Ford, repford@lashawnford.com

WILLIS, FORD ASK GOVERNOR TO ANSWER EQUITY CANNABIS CONCERNS; SCHEDULE LIVE PRESS CONFERENCE AND TOWN HALL FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9 AT 2 P.M.

Two veteran Illinois lawmakers today asked the Governor Pritzker administration to answer concerns and questions about why only 21 companies reached the lottery round to receive 75 cannabis dispensary licenses in Illinois and whether social equity has really been achieved.

Rep. Kathleen Willis, the House Majority Conference Chairperson, D-Northlake, and Rep. La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, also announced they will hold a Zoom/Facebook live press conference and town hall meeting on Wednesday, September 9, at 2 p.m. to hear the concerns from teams that applied and other key individuals worried about social equity.

Willis and Ford asked in the letter they sent to the Governor and key aides for a meeting with top administration officials before the final tiebreaker lottery is held and the winners are announced. While the legislators applauded the Governor's goal to create a social equity cannabis program, Willis and Ford said the results appear to not result in a fair cannabis program.

"This legislation was supposed to promote social equity in the marijuana industry and create opportunities for small entrepreneurs," Willis said. "The administration needs to thoroughly review the application process to make sure that goal of even-handedness was met."

Rep. Ford said, "My constituents have been contacting me and expressing their concern that the African American community got left behind again by a system that benefits rich insiders. Many questions and concerns have been raised about why some companies won and others did not. There must be transparency and all questions need to be answered."

Among the key questions the legislators raised are:

- KPMG – Did the no-bid contractor KPMG effectively score the application, was that process reviewed and did anyone from KPMG have any financial conflicts? Also, was there minority participation in the contract? Did KPMG have previous cannabis scoring experience?
- Lottery – Did the state consider holding off on the lottery announcement when it found out only 21 companies were chosen for the 75 licenses and is there still time to stop the tiebreaker process.
- Scoring – Will the administration release all scoring charts, deficiency notices and emails related to the process? Did the administration review the KPMG scoring? Did the state consider hiring temporary workers and doing the scoring itself?

Citizens wishing to participate in the Zoom/Facebook Live Town Hall press conference and meeting should email Rep. Ford's office at repford@lashawnford.com

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