



News from the Illinois House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WILLIS, FORD ASK GOVERNOR TO ANSWER EQUITY CANNABIS CONCERNS; SCHEDULE LIVE PRESS CONFERENCE AND VIRTUAL 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 concerns from teams that applied and other key individuals worried about social equity.

In a letter sent to the Governor and key aides, Willis and Ford asked for a meeting with top administration officials before the final tiebreaker lottery is held. While the legislators applauded the Governor's goal of creating a social equity cannabis program, Willis and Ford said the results so far appear to fall far from the goal.

"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, "Many constituents have been contacting me and expressing concern that the African American community got left behind again by a system that benefits wealthy insiders. Many questions and concerns have been raised about why some companies won and others didn't. We need transparency and all questions must 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 or slow down the tiebreaker process?
- Scoring – Will the administration release all scoring charts, instructions given to KPMG as well as their scoring rubric and materials, 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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