



July 3, 2019

July 3rd is Reentry Day

July 3rd marks Reentry Day in Illinois to bring awareness to the men and women in Illinois impacted by the criminal justice system - based on House Resolution 361 which I introduced and passed in the 100th General Assembly, which designates July 3 as Illinois Citizens Re-entry Day. This day is observed in recognition of Congressman Danny K. Davis' work in helping to provide ex-offenders with a second chance and opportunity to re-enter society as productive citizens, and to encourage continuing support of such citizens as they reenter their communities

When people serve their time and pay their debt to society, we cannot have a system that predicts failure and is a pathway back to prison. Ex-offenders leaving prison often face serious barriers, such as physical or mental health problems, no place to stay, or a lack of education or qualifications to hold a job. If we want to improve health and safety in our communities and decrease street violence in Chicago and across Illinois, we must open the gates to opportunities and tear down the racist walls for those reformed citizens with criminal records.

At our gathering at Malcolm X on July 3, I am happy to be joined by G. Flint Taylor; Uptown People's Law Center; Four Hundred Years; Brothers Standing Together; Ex-Cons For Community & Social Change; Westside NAACP; Men & Women In Prison Ministries; NAEFI; Westside Justice Center; TASC; Westside Health Authority; Census 2020; and others to call for:

- Ending isolated confinement
- Ending prison gerrymandering
- Expungement for sealed records
- Better health care in Illinois' prisons
- Right to vote for citizens in Illinois prison

We can no longer shut American citizens out of the work force, education, and housing in Illinois. All of us should see reentry issues and reforms as our one of our most important priorities.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District