



January 19, 2016

Youth Employment

Driven by strong concerns over a staggering 92 percent unemployment rate among African-American males ages 16-19 years old in the City of Chicago, I recently passed legislation through the House which would create the Commission on Young Adult Employment. House Bill 1490 would study ways that Illinois can boost employment opportunities for young adults who want to work. Students graduating from trade schools, colleges, and universities all need a fair shot at finding a good job after they have completed their education.

By bringing together leaders from the public and private sectors, this Commission will find real solutions to reduce the growing number of youths without work and will be tasked with identifying issues that prevent young adults from finding work. The Commission will consult with leaders from the public sector and business communities before making recommendations to the General Assembly.

The Commission will be made up of 17 members who will serve without compensation and be chaired by an appointee from Chicago State University. Commission members will submit an annual report to the General Assembly on November 30 of each year until the commission ends on January 1, 2019. The Commission will identify current opportunities such as JP Morgan Chase's five-year global New Skills for Youth Initiative, which encourages states to invest in demand-driven career education programs to address the high unemployment rates among 16- to 24-year-olds. House Bill 1490 now awaits consideration before the Senate.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District