



November 29, 2016

Let's Develop Our Vacant and Abandoned Properties

The city of Chicago has 10s of thousands of vacant and abandoned properties on the South and West Sides. Chicago's vacant and abandoned properties, whether residential or commercial, create costly problems. They are a drain on federal, state, county and city's budgets. They detract from the quality of life and deplete the economic opportunities of those living around them.

Vacant and abandoned properties create homes for drug sellers and harbor other dangerous crimes. Abandoned buildings are not just eyesores, but they are robbing community members of their life savings while at the same time putting their lives at risk. Vacant and abandoned properties in communities are impediments to any plan our city has for redevelopment and, ultimately, to the achievement of any city-wide economic development goals.

Minimizing the harm done by vacant and abandoned properties and restoring these properties to productive use will be a priority moving forward as I begin serving my 6th term as a member of the Illinois House of Representatives in January 2017.

Illinois must have an urban development plan that creates jobs and rebuilds the South and West Sides of Chicago. Illinois has two agencies that deal with vacant buildings. The Illinois Housing Development Agency (IHDA) works with local governments and non-profit organizations to offer revitalization and repair programs that address vacant residential properties and the blight that usually follows to benefit communities, and also funds programs that allow homeowners to make necessary repairs and accessibility improvements, allowing residents stay in their homes while improving the quality of single-family housing. The Illinois Office of Community Development of the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) administers the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The mission of this program is to assist Illinois communities with programs including Public Infrastructure, a Housing Rehabilitation Program, Economic Development, Critical Assistance, and a Revolving Fund.

I will work with the Illinois Housing Development Agency to bring Illinois' Revitalization and Repair Programs and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunities CDBG program to the South and West Sides of Chicago to rebuild our struggling communities.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District