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FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

For Immediate Release:
July 11, 2013

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Ford Sponsors Amendment to Protect Voting Rights After U.S. Supreme Court Ruling

CHICAGO – In response to a recent United States Supreme Court decision limiting federal protections for minority voters, state Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) has filed legislation proposing an amendment to the state constitution to ensure that citizens in Illinois are protected against discrimination when they vote.

“During the Civil Rights movement, our leaders fought long and hard so everyone, regardless of their race, color or ethnic background, has the right to speak their minds, select their leaders, and determine the course of our nation by voting,” Ford said. “The intent of the proposed constitutional amendment is to preserve access to the fundamental right of voting in the state of Illinois, for which so many have previously fought.”

Last month, the United States Supreme Court issued a decision limiting the federal government’s ability to enforce the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which prevented certain states, counties and cities with a history of racial discrimination from establishing local rules and policies that might adversely affect minorities’ voting rights. Ford’s House Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 34 would amend the Illinois Constitution to prevent the state or any level of local government in Illinois from implementing any voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice or procedure related to voting that would result in the denial or abridgement of the voting rights of any citizen on account of sex, race, color or language. Although Illinois was not restricted by the preclearance laws included in the Voting Rights Act, Ford’s amendment would guarantee that all citizens in Illinois could freely exercise their right to vote, regardless of changes in federal law.

“It is shocking that in this day and age our court system would remove protections for this critical constitutional right,” Ford said. “Since the court ruling, several states have wasted no time in gerrymandering districts in ways that previously would have been found to be unconstitutional. States have also adopted restrictive voting policies that have proven to disenfranchise minority voters. We can never allow this to happen in Illinois. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to continue to protect the integrity of the right to vote in our state.”

For more information, contact one of Ford’s constituent service offices: 816 S. Oak Park Avenue in Oak Park at 708-445-3673, 4800 W. Chicago Avenue in Chicago at 773-378-5902 or in the Stratton Office Building in Springfield at 217-782-5962.

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