

Press Release...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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For More Information:

State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford

773-378-5902

Ford and Advocates Continue the Fight for Child Care Funding

CHICAGO – With more child care facilities closing their doors in Illinois, state Rep. La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, continues to work with child care providers and other advocates to find a solution to the crisis and has introduced legislation to address the emergency. House Bill 4194 (<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=4194&GAID=13&GA=99&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=90499&SessionID=88>) appropriates additional amounts from the General Revenue Fund to the Illinois Department of Human Services for the Child Care Assistance Program, and is scheduled for the House Appropriations-Human Services Committee on Thursday, March 19, at 8 a.m. in Stratton Building, Room C-1, in Springfield.

The Illinois Department of Human Services' Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) provides low-income, working families with access to quality, affordable child care, allowing them to continue working and improving the health, emotional and social development of children. Families are required to cost-share on a sliding scale based on family size, income and the number of children in care. The CCAP budget for the current fiscal year, which runs through June 30, 2015, is underfunded by almost \$300 million. In Illinois, there are more than 3,000 licensed day care centers, 8000 licensed day care homes and 700 group day care homes with a combined capacity to serve more than 255,000 children.

Ford started a MoveOn petition (<http://petitions.moveon.org/sign/support-child-care-in>) which has generated more than 11,000 signatures in support of full funding for quality child care. Ford called a March 2nd press conference at the Thompson Center in Chicago, bringing together child care providers, parents and children who proclaimed a need for funding for the program. Last Wednesday, Ford and child care advocates and providers Nakisha Hobbs and Tamara Fair met with the Speaker of the House Michael J. Madigan to discuss the issue. Hobbs is the owner of It Takes a Village Early Learning Centers, and Fair is the owner of Premier Childcare Centers.

Hobbs notes, "In January of this year, the State of Illinois ran out of funding to pay child care providers for services rendered. Many providers who serve low-income working families have not received payment in 90 days. This crisis has caused over 200 providers to close their doors, thousands of children have lost connections with their primary caregivers and over 255,000 little girls and boys are at risk of being left home alone. State Representative La Shawn K. Ford, who has been a champion for children and families since this problem was identified, encouraged providers to hold our elected officials accountable to quickly address this state of emergency. Unfortunately, after eight full weeks of negotiations, the Illinois State Legislature has yet to identify the revenue necessary to bridge this shortfall. Last week, we called Representative Ford on his word and asked him to arrange a meeting between Child Care Advocates United and Speaker of the House, Michael J. Madigan. On Wednesday, March 11th, Speaker Madigan and Representative Ford took significant time to listen

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to our concerns and asked critical questions to increase their understanding of the devastation this budget crisis is creating for real people. Together, we discussed multiple strategies to provide immediate relief. The conversation ended with Speaker Madigan and Representative Ford's commitment to propose a plan of action to restore funding."

Hobbs continues, "It is imperative that this issue is resolved in an expeditious manner. As an experienced early childhood educator and business leader, I'm depending on the Illinois State Legislature to recognize the trauma this problem is creating in the lives of our babies and its devastating blow to the Illinois economy."

Also attending the meeting with Speaker Madigan was Tamara Fair, who said, "One of the things that impressed by the most was how engaged the Speaker was in what we had to say. He was genuinely concerned about our concerns, and I look forward to a resolution to this crisis."



Speaker Michael J. Madigan meeting with child care advocates/providers Nakisha Hobbs and Tamara Fair.

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