

Media Advisory



From State Representative La Shawn K. Ford

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 23, 2015

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

State Rep. La Shawn Ford

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Ford and Community Organizations Call on Gov. Rauner to Restore Crucial Grant Cuts

CHICAGO – Along with community organizations directly affected by cuts in grants and services, Illinois State Representative La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, will hold a press conference to discuss concerns over the current suspension of \$26 million in grants to social services and public health programs recently made by Gov. Rauner. The press conference will be held at the Plaza Arms (formerly the Austin YMCA) on Monday, April 27th at 9:30 a.m. Current cuts will affect grant programs such as Teen REACH, burial assistance for the indigent, and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

“Budgets reflect priorities, and Governor Rauner’s proposed budget does not meet the needs of residents of our state,” said Ford. “These cuts affect the most underserved and under-resourced people in our communities, and we cannot afford to make these cuts. We cannot take programs away from people who rely on them and then expect everything to be OK.”

Teen REACH services help to prepare youth to gain employment, which can be an effective way to prevent violence in the community. In a 2012 report by the Alternative Schools Network, the teen youth employment rate in Illinois was only 27%, making Illinois one of ten states with the highest teen unemployment rates in the country. Black teens had the lowest employment rates compared to all other racial and ethnic groups. In Illinois, only 16% of black teens were employed in 2012, while just 11% of black teens in Chicago had jobs during that year.

According to an article in the Huffington Post, the Funeral & Burial Benefits program served 8,649 poor in the last fiscal year. The program offered up to \$1,103 for funerals and \$552 for cremations or burials for the deceased who qualified for certain federal and state welfare programs at the time of their deaths.

\$165 million from the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program Fund (LIHEAP) has also been cut. Money deposited into the fund comes from energy assistance charges assessed on public utilities. The money is spent on low-income home energy assistance and weatherization programs. The funding serves to help qualifying low-income families pay their heating and electricity bills, as well as make weather-related improvements to their homes. LIHEAP helps to prevent these families from having utility service interruptions.

For more information, contact Ford’s office at 773-378-5902, or visit www.lashawnford.com.

Who:	Rep. La Shawn K. Ford; Community Stakeholders
What:	Press Conference on Budget Cuts
When:	Monday, April 27, 2015, 9:30 a.m.
Where:	Plaza Arms, 501 N. Central Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60644