

# Press Release...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

**For Immediate Release:**

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**For More Information:**

State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford

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## Ford Introduces Bill to Decriminalize Sale of Loose Cigarettes

**CHICAGO** – State Representative La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, has introduced legislation which would decriminalize the sale of single or loose cigarettes. “43-year-old Eric Garner, a father of six, lost his life in New York on the suspicion of selling single or loose cigarettes,” said Ford. “The sales of single or loose cigarettes should be a petty offense. Illinois law now forces police officers to arrest an individual for the sale of single or loose cigarettes. The aim of this legislation is not to make it easier to sell or smoke cigarettes, but to be smart and right about our justice process in Illinois. Our laws in Illinois continue to strain relationships between communities and law enforcement.”

House Bill 4212

(<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocTypeID=HB&DocNum=4212&GAID=13&SessionID=88&LegID=91278>) aims to amend the Prevention of Tobacco Use by Minors and Sale and Distribution of Tobacco Products Act. It provides that a violation of the Act involving the sale of distribution of single or loose cigarettes that are not contained within a sealed container, pack, or package to persons who are 18 years of age or older is a petty offense punishable by a fine of not more than \$50, which may be satisfied without a court appearance by a written plea of guilty and payment of all applicable fines, penalties, and costs.

“If we are going to improve relationships between law enforcement officers and communities, we must reduce the responsibilities of our police officers on matters that are less important to public safety,” said Ford. “It is important that we do everything we can to support policing that focuses on keeping our communities safer. We have to work to change our policing and criminal justice system to be smart and right on crime for the good of taxpayers.”

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) or visit [www.lashawnford.com](http://www.lashawnford.com).

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