

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 Urges Congress to Honor Tamir Rice With New Law

CHICAGO - State Representative La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, continues his call for a new law after the police officer's shooting of Tamir Rice was ruled reasonable and justified by two outside reports. In the wake of the shooting of 12 year old Tamir Rice by police officers in Cleveland, Ohio, who were responding to 911 call that said a person had a firearm, Ford introduced and passed HR 134 in the Illinois House of Representatives (<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/BillStatus.asp?DocTypeID=HR&DocNum=134&GAID=13&SessionID=88&LegID=86163>), which urges Congress to require replica gun manufacturers to design these guns to be bright colors.

"Replica guns or BB guns can look identical to real firearms, and they also share the same potential to produce similar senseless and tragic results when in the hands of children," said Ford. "This legislation calls for Congress to act to protect children and give responding law enforcement officers a better chance of distinguishing what is a deadly threat and what is a toy. Officers must make split-second, life or death decisions when responding to calls indicating an armed individual. We owe it to law enforcement officials to give additional information so they may make the right call to protect our communities."

Federal law currently requires a blaze orange ring to plug the barrel of replica guns; however, as in the case of Tamir Rice, this safety measure was missing on the toy gun he was holding that fatal morning. A United States Department of Justice Report on law enforcement engagement and response to toy guns estimated there were at least 200 incidents per year (U.S. Department of Justice - Bureau of Justice Statistics Paper from 1990, Toy Guns - Involvement in Crime and Encounters with Police). Unfortunately, since the report's publication in 1990, this number is almost certainly grown, putting many more officers and citizens in deadly jeopardy. In similar legislation, California Governor Jerry Brown signed the California Imitation Firearm Safety Act SB 199 into law in September. This act requires BB guns and simulated weapons to have a florescent coloration stripe on specific locations of the simulated weapon and the trigger guard.

"Federal legislation would help to prevent tragic shooting deaths like that of Tamir Rice and increase the safety of police officers by better identifying replica or toy guns from functioning firearms," said Ford. "With gun violence plaguing the streets of Chicago and many of its suburbs, we must do everything in our power to make a safer environment for our kids. The labeling of replica guns will save lives, and it is the right thing to do for public safety.

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).

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