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from State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford

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Ford Declares July 3 as Re-Entry Day, Calls for Reforms of Corrections System

CHICAGO – With 48% of ex-offenders in Illinois ending up back in prison within three years of release, state Rep. La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, has officially made July 3 of 2017 and 2018 Re-Entry Days in the state of Illinois. This day has been declared Re-Entry Day to be observed in recognition of Congressman Danny K. Davis' work in helping to provide ex-offenders with a second chance and opportunity to re-enter society as productive citizens, and to encourage continuing support of such citizens as they re-enter their communities.

“On the Fourth of July, we celebrate the independence and freedom that our country says is offered to all citizens. Unfortunately, when ex-offenders have served their time and are released back into the community, the system does not give them the same fair shake,” said Ford. “This July 3rd, the day before our federal Independence Day, I call on leaders in our community and in government agencies to ensure that upon release, these community members are not treated as second class citizens and that they have the same access to the unalienable rights promised in our Constitution; life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.”

Ford is the author and sponsor of House Resolution 361, a measure that was passed and makes July 3, the day before Independence Day, Re-Entry Day in Illinois. “With 95% of imprisoned individuals on track to return to their communities at some time and with many facing barriers to re-entry, it is very important that reforms are in place that keep these individuals from returning to prison,” said Ford. “Keeping ex-offenders from returning to prison is not only good for families and communities, but it presents huge savings to taxpayers.”

“Many of our corrections departments fall short of providing services or transitional programs to released offenders in our state,” said Ford. “Since there is little-to-no preparation built into the system, when people are released back into the community from prison, they often face serious barriers, such as physical or mental health problems, no place to stay, or a lack of education or qualifications to hold a job. If we want to end the street violence in Chicago and across Illinois, we must open the gates to opportunities for those with criminal records. It's not a surprise that a high level of violence happens in communities where the most people are released from Illinois' state prisons. We can no longer shut American citizens out of the work force, education, and housing in Illinois.”

Ford represents the 8th Representative District, which contains parts of Chicago's Austin neighborhood and portions of Berwyn, Brookfield, Forest Park, La Grange, La Grange Park, North Riverside and Oak Park. For more information, please contact Rep. Ford's District Office at 773-378-5902, 708-445-3673 or visit www.LaShawnFord.com.