



# Press Release...

*from 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 Creates Illinois Black History Task Force**

**CHICAGO** – Hoping to teach the true American history in every school in Illinois, state Rep. La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, introduced and passed House Resolution 1098 to create a task force to audit the 852 public school districts in Illinois to evaluate the level of African American history being taught in schools.

According to state law 105 ILCS 5/27-20.4, (from Ch. 122, par. 27-20.4), Illinois requires that every public elementary and high school shall include in its curriculum a unit of instruction studying the events of Black History, including the history of the African slave trade, slavery in America, and the vestiges of slavery in this country. These events shall include not only the contributions made by individual African-Americans in government and in the arts, humanities and sciences to the economic, cultural and political development of the United States and Africa, but also the socio-economic struggle which African-Americans experienced collectively in striving to achieve fair and equal treatment under the laws of this nation. The studying of this material shall constitute an affirmation by students of their commitment to respect the dignity of all races and peoples and to forever eschew every form of discrimination in their lives and careers.

“Even though this became state law in 2005, schools across Illinois still are not teaching Black History to their students,” said Ford. “Moving forward, I will be working with the Illinois State Board of Education to measure the success of African American history curriculums across Illinois. We will do everything we can to find best practices throughout the state and assist those schools unfamiliar with the practice and implementation,” said Ford.

On June 3, Ford hosted a viewing party of the movie “The Birth of a Nation” and a discussion followed the movie on the impact of slavery in America. “We cannot let the lack of knowledge about slavery continue in America,” said Ford. “We have to teach the real history so that we can end the misunderstanding around slavery, as recently expressed by rapper Kayne West. We must make it possible for Black people and all of America to heal from those dark days of slavery. It's clear that we must make sure that every community benefits from knowledge of the past struggles during the time of slavery,” said Ford.

“Teaching black history in schools helps students who have little or no interaction with African Americans to develop an accurate understanding of African Americans in the United States,” Ford said. “This instruction is critical to outlining similarities and building an understanding between people of different races. If we are to end hate and racism in America, we must know one another's history and the struggles of our brothers and sisters,” said Ford.

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

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