



# Press Release...

*from State Representative La Shawn K. Ford*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 26, 2018

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford

773-378-5902

## **To Help Chicago, IDOC Needs Reform**

**CHICAGO** – Illinois State Representative La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, announces a press conference called Operation Save Lives, calling for reform of the Illinois Department of Corrections, on Friday, October 5, 2018 at 10:30 a.m. at the Stateville Correctional Center in Crest Hill, IL. Convoys of buses will leave at 9 a.m. from the West Austin Development Center, 4920 W. Madison St, Chicago, with a rally and press conference to follow at Stateville.

In 2016, an estimated 21,000 people returned to Chicago from prison. Parolees return to primarily four zip codes in the city, creating segregated areas that receive a large number of returnees, and these zip codes are mostly on the West Side of Chicago. According to Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, 1,200 individuals are released directly from prison to homeless shelters in Chicago annually. In 2018, Illinois reduced funding for most programs, but increased its budget for the Department of Corrections, spending almost \$1.5 billion annually to incarcerate just over 44,000 inmates at the average cost of \$34,000/inmate.

“In spite of these resources, we continue to hear of major problems within the Illinois Department of Corrections,” said Ford. “Prisoners are not receiving the educational opportunities they need to be equipped for a successful return home. Illinois must put trade and vocational training or career technical education programs in prisons. The programs must be designed to teach inmates about general employment skills or skills needed for specific jobs and industries. We still hear of misuse of solitary confinement. There are major deficiencies in prisoner medical and mental health care. On release, many ex-offenders do not have the medications they need, even though they are supposed to receive two weeks of medication with follow-up appointments in the community to which they are returning. Many still leave prison without an ID, in spite of several Illinois laws that require it.”

“Even though I introduced Ban the Box legislation and it eventually became law, people still do not have the opportunities they need to find a job to be able to support their families when they return home,” Ford continued. “Furthermore, due to the issue of prisoner gerrymandering, prisoners are counted in the district where the prisons are located rather than their home district. This unjust system prevents any accountability and an undercounting of people in Chicago.”

“If we don’t reform our prisons, the streets in our city will continue to be a problem. Criminal justice reform and reform of the Department of Corrections are needed if we want safer and more vibrant communities,” said Ford. “The Illinois Department of Corrections spends too much of our taxpayer money and it does not help returning citizens to help our communities when they do return back home. We deserve and demand better.”

**WHO:** Representative La Shawn K. Ford, Greene Acres Consulting, Keepin’ It Real, Temple of Mercy Association, Breaking Bread, American Legion’s Commander Davis, National Block Club University, Sigma Fraternity, Westside Health Authority, Hip Hop Detoxx, D-Nash, Ex-Cons For Community and Social Change - ECCSC

**WHAT:** Press Conference - Operation Save Lives: Reform The Department of Corrections for Safer Communities

**WHEN:** Friday, October 5, 2018, 10:30 a.m.

**WHERE:** Bus convoy leaving West Austin Development Center, 4920 W. Madison, Chicago at 9 a.m.;  
Press Conference to follow at Stateville Correctional Center, 16830 Route 53, Crest Hill, Illinois 60403 at 10:30 a.m.

Ford represents the Eighth 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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