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FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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Ford Requests Task Force to Tackle Gun Violence

CHICAGO – To build on efforts recently taken by gun-safety advocates and Illinois House Democrats to address root causes of deadly shootings and pursue safety measures that are acceptable to large majorities of people in Illinois, state Rep. La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, is calling for a new state Firearm Public Awareness Task Force. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Health Statistics, 1,543 Illinoisans died from gun violence in 2017, and recent analyses of data from the Chicago Police Department found that a person is shot every three hours and six minutes in Chicago.

“As gun violence continues to plague Chicago’s communities and other neighborhoods across Illinois, we cannot sit back and allow gun violence to terrorize families in our state,” said Ford. “We must find common ground on comprehensive gun policy to protect people in Illinois and prevent senseless homicidal and suicidal shootings in our state. The people I represent refuse to accept daily gun violence as the new normal. This spring, gun-safety advocates and House Democrats took significant steps to get guns out of the wrong hands by passing the Fix the FOID Act. But, as long as gun violence plagues the residents of our state and threatens our liberty and the safety of our lives, we must examine the evidence to look for ways to keep our families safe. It is my hope this Task Force will continue these efforts.”

Ford has formally requested that House Speaker Michael J. Madigan commission a Firearm Public Awareness Task Force that could bring together advocates, law enforcement, educators and public health researchers, mental health experts, and other concerned residents to review the issue of gun violence and make legislative recommendations designed to reduce violence. The Task Force would be part of a multifaceted approach to gun safety, serving as a tool of discussion that complement legislative efforts such as the Fix the FOID Act; universal background checks; bans on violent offenders purchasing guns; public space safety; sensible restrictions on the possession of military-style firearms; and other proven and well-accepted measures.

“Every day, families must deal with the tragic consequences of shootings that tear communities and families apart,” Ford said. “I know and feel this all very personally – last weekend, one of my family members had his life cut short on the West Side and was one of the 8 people killed by gunfire in Chicago. There have been important strides made to proactively address mass shootings and other shootings here in Illinois, and I want to build on this work. Every life is valuable, and we need to continue to work every day to stop the constant cycle of the tragedy that our families all too often face.”

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