

# Media Advisory...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

**For Immediate Release:**  
August 19, 2021

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## West Side Afghan and Iraq War Veterans Locked Out of Illinois' Cannabis Industry

**Chicago-** State Representative La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) stands with two U.S war Veterans Jermell Chavis and Keith Smith as they hold a press conference in reaction to them losing their chance at all three Illinois cannabis lotteries. This is due to some social equity applicants having ties to out-of-state corporate cannabis companies. The Veterans believe that allowing corporate cannabis companies from out of state was unfair to the social equity applicants that it was meant for, such as the underserved communities. The press conference will be held on Friday, August 20th at 11:30 a.m. at the Thompson Center.

“Both Jermell Chavis and Keith Smith check all the boxes for who should have a cannabis license in Illinois,” said Ford. “Illinois must continue to bring fairness and opportunities in our cannabis industry for the men, women, and communities hardest hit by the war.”

Jermell Chavis and Keith Smith, both Chicago natives, and social equity applicants, were one of the many applicants who applied for a dispensary license with Illinois and was awarded a perfect score qualifying them for a chance in all three lottery rounds to own a dispensary in Illinois.

“I put all financial resources into one application, not being able to afford multiple applications backed by big cannabis corporations, as it appears most of the lottery winners were,” said Chavis. “And, unlike all other applicants, I am a true home-grown Illinois social equity applicant who is a disabled war Veteran who comes from a disproportionately impacted area and has resided there my entire life. We are those who have suffered directly from the war on drugs and were denied a license.”

**Who:** La Shawn K. Ford and Social Equity Applicants

**What:** Calling On Illinois to Take A Look at The Fairness of The Social Equity Application Process

**When:** Friday, August 20th at 11:30 a.m.

**Where:** James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolph St, Chicago, IL 60601

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