

# News

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*. . . from the Illinois House of Representatives*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FORD ADVANCES BILL TO ELECT ICC COMMISSIONERS**

*Commission's recent approval of steep rate hikes shows accountability needed*

**SPRINGFIELD** – State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) on Wednesday advanced legislation through the House State Government Administration Committee that would end the practice of gubernatorial appointments to the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) and instead require commission members to be elected.

“Not a single current member of the Illinois Commerce Commission voted against Commonwealth Edison’s recent rate hikes that are overwhelming consumers, and that is troubling,” Ford said. “And what is even more troubling is that this commission is unelected and unaccountable to those very consumers.”

House Bill 3602 was introduced by Ford in February during a rare meeting of the Committee of the Whole, which saw the ICC called before House members to answer questions about their approval of utility rate increases for Commonwealth Edison and Ameren. Ford’s legislation calls for public election of five members of the ICC, one from each of the state’s judicial districts, beginning in 2008. Commission members would then elect one member to serve a two-year term as chairperson.

In January 2006, the ICC approved a plan that ultimately allowed electric utilities to raise rates, claiming that competition exists in the Illinois power market. Ford recently helped pass legislation in the House that would roll back the increases and refund consumers for amounts paid over the 2006 levels. That legislation has not yet been approved for debate by Senate leadership.

“The ICC is a group that previously operated under the radar, but we now know they have the power to cause tremendous suffering to families and small businesses,” Ford said. “Whenever we have the chance to make government more accountable to the people, we should take it.”

For more information on House Bill 3602, contact Rep. Ford’s district office at (773) 378-5902.

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