

News

April 10, 2007

. . . from the Illinois House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FORD STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF VOTING AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS

Legislator speaks at forum focused on voting's power to open up government

CHICAGO – State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) joined state Rep. Constance Howard (D-Chicago) at an open forum on Tuesday to discuss why voter turnout is low and how various constituencies suffer as a result.

“We have a serious problem in this country because not enough people, including African Americans, are going to the voting booths,” Ford said. “Not only is voting a constitutional right we had to fight to claim, it’s a responsibility that we in the black community need to take more seriously. This forum is a good way to start finding out why African Americans don’t vote in the numbers we should and how we can create a stronger sense of civic participation and pride in voting.”

The forum, held at Harold Washington College (HWC), focused on engaging members of the campus and the surrounding communities in a discussion on the high costs of not voting, something rarely considered when discussing voter turnout. Key topics covered during the forum included access to power, influencing those who set the agenda, and the relationship among the social, economic, and political aspects of life.

In conjunction with the forum, interdisciplinary faculty at HWC designed a Civic Engagement and Service Learning project aimed at providing students an opportunity to discuss issues and interact with lawmakers who are influencing the political agenda, specifically in Illinois.

“This kind of interaction is a great way to bridge the gap between people with questions about voting and those of us who are elected,” Ford said. “During Black History Month in February, I visited schools and churches, emphasizing how crucial it is to vote and get involved in the political process. I hope this forum makes everyone more interested in how politics makes this state and nation tick.”

For more information on this or any other issue, contact Rep. Ford’s constituent service office at (773) 378-5902.

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