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FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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REP. LA SHAWN K. FORD, A SAFE HAVEN FOUNDATION, OTHER LEADERS TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE SUNDAY TO DISCUSS CRITICAL NEED TO CONTINUE FUNDING SOCIAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

***Service Recipients In Crisis Also to Speak
Cuts Would Skyrocket Long-Term Costs 700% to 900%***

CHICAGO - On Sunday, May 22, at 10:30 a.m., Illinois Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-8th), A Safe Haven Foundation (ASHF) President Neli Vazquez-Rowland, and other community leaders will hold a press conference at ASHF, 2750 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, IL, 60608.

Rep. Ford, Ms. Vazquez-Rowland, and other leaders in government and social service will discuss the devastating impact further cuts to program services will have on communities that already experience high rates of poverty, unemployment, crime and addiction. Also scheduled to speak are Chicagoans currently receiving vital, life-saving, and transformative community-based social services.

Rep. Ford chose ASHF as the site for the press conference because it provides evidence-based services to address unemployment, homelessness, and addiction with the most efficient model possible. Ms. Vazquez-Rowland said that cutting funding for these services would cost the state billions of dollars in the long run.

"Over 50% of substance abuse service providers have gone out of business in the last two years, and prisons are overflowing with the consequences," said Ms. Vazquez-Rowland. "A Safe Haven Foundation's ability to serve as a crisis center will continue for now, but without this funding those resources will also be in jeopardy."

Ford has long been a proponent of health and safety issues, and he says budget cuts to programs that provide addiction treatment services, job training and placement, and housing support will have a devastating impact on the community. He believes the state should stop targeting programs that serve the most disadvantaged communities, a budget-cutting practice he says is well established.

"By providing effective services, communities can stabilize and begin to achieve economic growth; failing to provide services will only result in greater costs down the road. We must invest in programs that have been proven to reverse the strangle hold that poverty, crime and addiction has held on neighborhoods," said Ford. Ford is issuing a call to his fellow legislators to protect the funding for these services.

Human services may face cuts of over \$500 million. For example, according to Governor Quinn's proposal, funds for addiction prevention and treatment will be cut by more than 50%, leaving Illinois citizens to pay 7 to 9 times more for emergency room visits, legal fees, and prison stays.

"I just want to change. I have to change," said Diane Wynn, who is currently in recovery at ASHF, where

she is receiving housing, pre-employment training, and other classes. She has two children, ages 3 and 5. "I just don't want to do that anymore, but without the funding, that leads me right back to where I came from-stealing and drug abuse. And where would that leave my children? Lost."

The House and Senate budgets differ by over \$1 billion, so Rep. Ford, Ms. Vazquez-Rowland, and other leaders have hope that in reconciling the proposals, the state government will invest in services that are proven to save taxpayers money now and in the future, and not decimate a system that is providing real outcomes in addressing substance abuse and homelessness issues.

About A Safe Haven Foundation

A Safe Haven Foundation is America's leading social and economic development model, providing evidence-based, community-based, integrated services that include supportive and affordable housing, individual case management, healthcare, treatment, life skills education, and job training and placement to thousands of individuals a year, including homeless families, military veterans, and ex-offenders reentering society from prison or recovering from the diseases of substance abuse and alcoholism. A Safe Haven Foundation designs service plans that are unique to the individual's needs and partners with for-profit and not-for-profit social business enterprises to achieve self-sufficiency for its clients. Since 1994, A Safe Haven has provided services to over 36,000 people. A Safe Haven Foundation is a 501(c)(3) organization based in Chicago, Illinois. Learn more at www.ASafeHaven.org.

Learn more about Illinois State Representative La Shawn K. Ford (D-8) at www.LaShawnFord.com.

For more information, call Ford's constituent service office at (773) 378-5902.