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FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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Rep. Ford Introduces Package of Legislation Targeting Difficulties Facing Young Adults and Older Job Seekers

SPRINGFIELD, IL – State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) wants the state to focus on ways to help both young adults and older job seekers find employment, and has introduced two pieces of legislation aimed at increasing their employment levels in state government.

“With a tight job market, employers seem to be avoiding hiring both young people and older job seekers, which sets Illinois and our country up for serious long-term repercussions,” Ford said. “When Illinoisans who are at the beginning and near the end of their working lives can’t earn money, our society as a whole will have to pick up the tab through higher social service spending.”

Ford recently filed House Bills 3777 and 3778 to address the issue of unemployment for younger and older people. House Bill 3777 creates a commission charged with increasing employment in state government for the aging community (defined as those aged 50 and older), and House Bill 3778 does the same for young adults (defined as those aged 18-25). Each commission will be required to develop plans to increase state hiring of these populations, especially in technical, supervisory and managerial roles. The commissions will be required to report annually to the General Assembly on their progress.

“We are close to losing an entire generation of kids to a long-term economic slowdown that has all but destroyed their faith in our economy and causes so many to lose hope and turn to crime,” Ford said. “By the same token, job seekers over 50 who were once worried about retirement are now worried about putting food on the table. We owe it to both groups to find ways to get them working.”

Ford has also filed House Bill 3779, legislation that would create a pilot program to test jobseekers at state unemployment sites for state jobs. To obtain most state jobs in Illinois, applicants must pass a competitive test to determine their fitness for various state jobs, and Ford believes it is critical that the state’s main personnel agency, Central Management Services, coordinates with the Illinois Department of Employment Security to help prepare the unemployed for potential state employment opportunities.

Rep. Ford is in the process of scheduling hearings in Chicago on his employment legislation to give members of the public a chance to offer their thoughts and concerns. For more information or to participate in the hearings, call Ford's constituent service office at (773) 378-5902.

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