



August 2, 2017

Funding for Our Schools

I urged Gov. Bruce Rauner to sign SB1, a school funding bill that would distribute \$350 million annually not just to schools in Chicago but also to schools across the state. When I spoke at a news conference last weekend held at the Academy for Scholastic Achievement, a nonprofit school at 4651 W. Madison that focuses on educating at-risk youth, I said that SB1 makes sure that the funding for education is not based on a person's ZIP code or property taxes. If we ensure appropriate funding, we will not have a pipeline to prison for black children, but we will meet their needs and they will have more opportunities to grow and compete in our highly skilled society.

However, even though Gov. Rauner's own education adviser, Beth Purvis, said the governor supported 90% of the education funding reform bill that was passed by the legislature this spring, Gov. Rauner vetoed parts of the bill because he said it was too generous to Chicago Public Schools. According to the governor's office, the veto removed a minimum funding requirement; the Chicago block grant from the formula; the normal cost of pick-up for CPS pensions; and unfunded liability deductions. It also removed "escalators" that Gov. Rauner believed would increase costs. Also, Gov. Rauner eliminated a permanent hold-harmless provision and substituted a two-year guarantee that school districts would not receive less state aid than they current get. After two years, the bottom could fall out of state funding for schools throughout the state.

We need to effectively fund education for students in Chicago. We do not have to apologize for fighting for the resources our schools need here in Chicago. It is not helpful to demonize or target our schools in Chicago.

Now SB1 moves back to the Senate for consideration, where an override of the veto would require a 3/5ths majority. Should the Senate fail to override, the measure will die. That would mean there would be nothing in place to get state aid to schools to open in time this fall. Legislators would have to go back to the drawing board and craft a new measure. If the measure is overridden in the Senate, it must still be overridden in the House, again by a 3/5ths majority.

We can always do better and SB1 is not perfect, but it doesn't hurt taxpayers and it helps our school systems. SB1 would increase funding for all of Illinois' school districts to an amount of money needed to efficiently educate every student through increased funding from the state. I will work to overturn the governor's veto and get money to our schools.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District