



June 24, 2018

What Has the Governor Done for Blacks?

Recently, Governor Bruce Rauner made comments inserting the Black community into Illinois' politics when he said, "I've done more for Black business, for Black economic opportunity, and Black education opportunity than anybody." It is music to my ears to have the debate about the needs of the Black community be a subject of discussion in Illinois.

As an African American Democrat in Illinois, I can't defend the work of any of the white men who have been governors of Illinois, based on the conditions that Black families, majority Black schools, and Black communities continue to endure in Illinois.

As alarming as Governor Bruce Rauner's comments were to some in the Black community, his beliefs rightly placed emphasis on the extent of the neglect of African Americans in the state of Illinois. Now that the discussion is on the table and Governor Rauner seems to want to express a passion for the concerns of the African American community, here is a Democrat who is willing to take him at his word and is willing to work with him for a more equal and just Illinois. The governor doesn't own the total blame for 200 years of Illinois' social and economic inequities. And, his comments must ignite the Black community to be even more engaged and demanding in the political process to improve treatment of Black people by their own government.

So, I urge the governor to join me to tour the West Side of Chicago to learn the reality of what it means to be Black in Illinois. I will show him that after almost four years of his administration, there is no new public school construction, there is little business growth, and there is not a single construction crane - which signify economic development and vitality in many of Chicago's neighborhoods – but not on the West Side. I will work with Governor Rauner until he is no longer governor. The Black community cannot afford to wait for the right person or the right time to demand a deliberate, focused, and funded plan to deal with the crippling conditions endured by our Black families and communities.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District