



July 2, 2018

Here is Something the Governor Can Do!

In this week that we celebrate Independence Day, we must give freedom to our own American citizens. I wrote the following letter to Governor Rauner.

Dear Governor Rauner,

Recently, I conducted a poll asking if Illinois should develop a process to extend a blanket pardon for all nonviolent reformed citizens after five years, to create a pathway to a clean record. The majority of constituents thought it was a good idea - to improve the quality of life not only for the reformed citizens, but also for communities like the West Side of Chicago.

If the reformed citizen stays out of the justice system for five years, his or her nonviolent offense should be seen as a one-time bad choice. Many circumstances occur in nonviolent cases, but staying out of trouble for five years should be looked at as self-improvement and a lesson learned. After five years of improvement, the reformed citizen should be allowed to continue life as any other citizen, with the same opportunities to continue on his or her path of success.

With better opportunities comes a better quality of life. I believe, as do many others, that everyone deserves the right to better themselves. Many reformed citizens cannot currently accomplish this, and are prone to fall on hard times and continue the cycle. With a path to better opportunities, and working with state agencies like DECO and IHDA, reformed citizens can improve their communities. Having more people working and attending school or learning a trade would improve and bring vitality back to the West Side.

I believe a blanket pardon of nonviolent reformed citizens after five years would ultimately improve the quality of life for everyone currently living on the West Side. I would like to invite you to the West Side for a tour of opportunities and a discussion on reformed citizens.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District