



August 8, 2018

To Decrease Chicago's Violence, We Can't Be Trump-Free

Seventy-four people were shot and 12 were killed in Chicago this past weekend, which was the city's deadliest weekend yet in 2018. This past Sunday at 7 a.m., three people were shot, one fatally, at LeClaire and Washington, just steps from my church, St. Martin de Porres. We need to do something differently. That's why I went on Fox & Friends on Monday to say again that Illinois should not be considered a Trump-free zone. I said that Mayor Emanuel should work with President Trump to help our Chicago communities that are most affected by violence. Illinois sends more taxpayer dollars to the federal government than most states and we have to make sure our tax dollars are being used correctly.

The mayor of Chicago should be working closely with the Labor Department, with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and even with the U.S. Surgeon General, because there's so much trauma on the West and South Sides of Chicago.

We can't make progress by being divided. I'm not throwing the mayor under the bus - I want to let him know that we want to work with him. But, it is my view that as long as we're divided and fighting against the president and not getting the resources that we need, progress is not going to happen.

Now, I'm a Democrat, and I'm also saying that Democrats must step up. All Democrats, all of my colleagues, must step up and put politics aside. We must work with President Trump and we must demand that we get help in the city of Chicago, on the West Side of Chicago and in our South Side communities so that we can bring safety to all of the communities in the city.

But, the only way the president should come here is if he's coming to announce something strong, a comprehensive plan to help us in Chicago to deal with all of violence and bloodshed that respects the needs of people living on the West and South sides.

We have established the West Side Development Task Force to come together to demand economic development on the West Side. The work to end the blight on Chicago's West Side will replace vacant lots with businesses and residents. The Task Force will have a comprehensive plan to generate a capital bill request which will be filed in Springfield in January. This week we filed double the number of petition signatures needed to put a referendum on the November ballot asking 29th Ward voters if the city and state should work together to build a new comprehensive high school in Austin. We also have a 2020 Census Task Force so we can get an accurate count to get the resources that we need. These are some of the things we need to end the bloodshed on the West Side.

These are some of the resources we need to make the West Side strong. We need our federal tax dollars to work for us!

We need to make positive progress to stem the current violence. State Representative Barbara Wheeler, a Republican from Crystal Lake, will join me to host a conference call for all Illinois House members on Friday, August 10, 2018 to schedule a bipartisan press conference aiming to promote these agenda items:

1. Demand that within 30 days city, state and relevant stakeholders present a comprehensive plan to end deadly violence
2. Form a concrete plan to end the flow of illegal drugs and guns into the South and West Sides of Chicago
3. Deploy additional resources from state, city, and county to violence-affected communities to provide behavioral health support.

We must show that we have the will to use smart people and smart ideas to decrease violence in our communities. Please contact me at repford@lashawnford.com with your ideas. Let's pray together - and act together – to end violence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Ford', with a stylized flourish at the end.

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District