



October 24, 2018

## **JB Needs to Deal with Institutional Racism**

J.B. Pritzker needs to be a leader and deal with the problem of institutional racism. Last week, according to the Chicago Tribune, staffers who have worked for J.B. Pritzker's campaign filed a federal lawsuit alleging racial discrimination in their months on the job, alleging that African-American and Latino campaign staffers "are herded into race-specific positions where they are expected to interact with the public, offered no meaningful chance for advancement, and receive less favorable treatment than their white counterparts."

As a Democrat who supports JB's election to be governor of our state, I urge JB to use this opportunity to confront institutional racism and announce that he will add fighting institutional racism to his platform moving forward. JB should look into these claims and be outraged that this happened, and these claims should be investigated.

It is important to note that JB has not been personally accused of racism, but we can never ignore a person's personal feelings about their treatment. Institutional racism is an American problem, and we see it in contracts and opportunities in Illinois. If JB becomes governor, as I hope he does, he will be dealing with this issue all the time. We have heard claims of institutional racism in the Departments of Transportation and Corrections, among many others. This is an opportunity for JB to show that he will be a governor who will take claims of racism seriously and will deal with them right away. Our state can't get better if we don't take racism seriously.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, 'Like life, racial understanding is not something that we find but something that we must create'. This is a great opportunity for JB to create more racial understanding.

And, rather than dealing with this through lawsuits and counter lawsuits, bitter statements, and charges of extortion, I feel that the case with the campaign workers would be a perfect instance for using the principles of restorative justice. As the Chair of the House Committee on Restorative Justice, I could see this episode be resolved successfully by calling victims and those they accuse together with a restorative justice facilitator to work out a healing solution for all. This problem caused harm, and justice should focus on repairing that harm. The people most affected by this problem should be able to participate in its resolution.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford  
State Representative-Eighth District