



September 29, 2021

The Root Causes of Violence

We need to be laser-focused on the need to create comprehensive, long-term solutions to address the root causes of violence. This is why I am grateful I have been appointed to co-chair a new Public Safety & Violence Prevention Task Force, along with co-chair state Representative Frances Hurley, that will bring together local officials, community advocates, law enforcement, public defenders, and bipartisan representatives from across the state.

This new task force will bring together all stakeholders to develop a collaborative approach to the violence crisis, whether it be gun violence, hate crimes, sexual and domestic assaults, or other forms of violence. We will work with task force members to review and account for violence prevention funding efforts, hear new ideas from violence prevention groups, and conduct listening tours with local officials and state agencies. To make sure taxpayer funds are used wisely and most effectively, the task force will also examine all appropriations awarded to organizations contracted with the state to prevent and end violence in Illinois.

“It pains me when I talk with families about the losses they have endured this past summer due to out-of-control violence,” Hurley said. “As we work to find ways to reduce crime rates and support our communities, it’s important that all groups are at the table for this, including law enforcement, community members, and prosecutors. By bringing everyone together, we can talk through ideas, concerns, and questions of all stakeholders while ensuring we come to solutions that work for everyone.”

I thank Speaker Welch for recognizing the need for this task force and I am excited to partner with Rep. Hurley to begin our work. We have to recognize that so much of the current violence involves our youth and we must examine what educational and youth development outlets are being underutilized. Policing cannot be the end-all-be-all - we have to look at violence through a comprehensive lens that understands disinvestment in communities, housing insecurity, food security, and other issues.

The Public Safety & Violence Prevention Task Force is expected to work with the state agencies, religious and community groups that work to curb violence, mental health providers, law enforcement, and organizations focused on job opportunities for at-risk youth. Taskforce meeting notices will be posted on www.ilga.gov.

I’d also like to invite you to join me and co-hosts Revin Fellows and Meleika Gardner every Saturday from 2-3 p.m. for our radio talk show on WVON 1690 entitled 'Chicago Heal'. Our hour-long show will be a campaign to push mental health healing for communities and families in Chicago. It will be repeated on WCPT 820 AM on Sundays from 6-7 p.m. The show will bring mental health experts

together to help communities and families in Chicago heal from the past and ongoing trauma of violence in Chicago. Please join us by listening to the show, please call in, and let's help Chicago heal.

Here is a Facebook link introducing the show: <https://www.facebook.com/100005177499590/posts/1864912763691289/?d=n>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'La Shawn K. Ford', written in a cursive style.

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District