

State Representative La Shawn K. Ford
Chicago Mayoral Bid Announcement
November 8, 2019



One Chicago – Powered by People!

Today, you all know me as State Representative La Shawn K. Ford. And while that is true, I am at heart a West Sider – someone who has dealt with the social and economic issues that plague so many families throughout our city.

I was born in Cabrini-Green and I grew up in Austin. I never knew my biological father, but I had a father in my life who meant a lot to me and I loved him, but he committed suicide. Like many families in Chicago, people in my family have struggled with heroin and mental health issues. Like many families in Chicago, my family has lost loved ones to AIDS. Like many families in Chicago, my family has lost young people to street violence and we have had to deal with the criminal justice system. People in my family still struggle to find work after being jailed and imprisoned.

We had a house fire when I was 10, and we moved to the Back of the Yards for a while. I always thought we were rich growing up, because my mother knew how to rob Peter to pay Paul - we went to Catholic schools, always had meals to eat, had new outfits, and had lots of gifts at Christmas and birthdays. My mom taught and showed us by example that it's not how much you make, but it's how wisely you spend what you make. Like many families across Chicago, white, black or brown, my family struggled growing up, but we worked hard to pay those bills. I can remember my mom working overtime, sometimes doing double shifts and then coming home to cook dinner and make lunches for the next day. I remember the pride and dignity we had when we went to pick up her check.

So, I was fortunate to have love in my family and my church family to push me in school as I graduated from Loyola, taught for six years in the Chicago Public Schools, and became a small business owner with my own West Side real estate business, employing many families in Chicago.

But, like many in Chicago, I had to personally deal with the criminal justice system when I was falsely accused of bank fraud. I had to fight 17 federal felony charges. After being offered many plea deals to take a felony and spend years in jail, all 17 counts were dropped on the day the trial was to start. I was fortunate that I had support and resources to fight the charges, but we know that there are so many innocent people who can't afford to fight their charges.

I had challenges in my business, too. At one point, I had 6 real estate offices and 50 agents, but after the financial collapse of 2008, I had to fight to reinvent my business to survive, like many businesses had to do.

Our city needs a mayor who has run a business, who has overcome challenges, who knows what real life is like, and who can help Chicago overcome challenges and become One Chicago, Powered by People.

When I was studying at Loyola, teaching on the North Side, and selling homes in my real estate business, I saw firsthand that not only black families struggle, but we all struggle. Families struggle, regardless of race, and that's why we must come together.

For the last 12 years, I have had the honor of serving as state Representative for the Eighth District, serving as Chair of Restorative Justice, Chair of Financial Institutions, Chair of Small Business Empowerment and

Workforce Development, and making tough budget decisions on the Appropriations Committees for Elementary & Secondary Education and Human Services. With the activism of many of you here, working with the public and private sectors, we have been able to achieve many successes. But there is so much more to do.

What we want is really pretty simple – the people of Chicago want a seat at the table, and our beloved city of Chicago should be financially stable, healthy and safe - and that is why I now announce that I am running to become the next Mayor of the City of Chicago.

This is what One Chicago feels like.

Now, we know that Chicago needs to heal. We can no longer allow Chicago's zip codes to determine our life expectancy, our educational opportunities, and our ability to work our families out of poverty.

We need to heal, and we CAN heal.

Together, we can make One Chicago.

When abandoned buildings, vacant lots and vacant store fronts are turned into homes and businesses that pay taxes and create vibrant communities.

This is what One Chicago feels like. Powered by People!

When murder cases are solved, illegal guns stop flowing into our neighborhoods, and people feel safer in their communities.

This is what One Chicago feels like.

When good police officers don't stay silent, and we have true police reform and real trust between the community and our police.

This is what One Chicago feels like.

When we have transparency in how laws are made and how taxes are instituted in Chicago, rather than pushing laws through City Council without hearings or public comment.

This is what One Chicago feels like

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr, said, "Racial understanding is not something that we find but something that we must create." When we acknowledge and confront systemic racism in this city, we can create healing between races, neighborhoods, religions and classes.

We become financially stable when we eliminate Jim Crow laws - when we eliminate income inequality; when we eliminate education inequalities; when we eliminate the costs of gunshot victims.

We have to protect our families and businesses from all of the taxes, fees, and fines that drive people into poverty and impact landlords, homeowners, businesses, and the city's population.

We must build a manufacturing and technology training center in Chicago. Chicago will lead the way in closing the skill gap in America. Chicago will not only have high quality community colleges we will have the best manufacturing and technology in the United States of America.

We must spend our taxpayer dollars to stimulate the rebuilding of the West and South Sides, creating jobs and opportunities. **Chicago can move forward, grow and prosper ONLY when ALL of Chicago is doing well, including the West and South Sides.**

We need a mayor who personally understands the struggles of families and businesses, but at the same time knows the process and relationships in Springfield --- JB and Juliana will need a partner in Chicago who will fight for everyday working families.

I don't have all of the answers – no one person does. **Powered by People** means that people must participate and work to make it happen. If we really want it, we can do it. Things don't get done because elected officials want it – things happen because **We the People** want it, organize, show up, and make it happen.

President Johnson didn't make Civil Rights legislation happen – it was voter pressure and action that made it happen. Marriage equality happened because people demanded it. Reversing cuts to child care happened because people demanded it.

There is a lot of talk about so many people being in the race for mayor of Chicago.

If you were car shopping, you would do research to find the car that's reliable, dependable, and proven to meet your family's needs.

When you do your research in the race for mayor, you will find out that for the last 12 years, we have helped thousands of people find jobs; we have changed the job application process for people with criminal backgrounds; we have helped thousands of ex-offenders seal their criminal records; we have fought to give equal protection under the law for women and those in the LGBTQ community; we have fought for the humane treatment of immigrants; we have fought to restore 300 million dollars in child care funding; we made it possible to use LINK cards at farmers markets; we passed laws that expanding screening for HIV; we expanded small business entrepreneurship for ex-offenders; and we established heroin and violence prevention task forces to save lives.

So, after you do your research....it's time to ride with Ford!

We can no longer believe that we can't catch killers in Chicago. We can no longer believe that all of the streets of Chicago can't be clean and free of litter. We can no longer believe that injustice is what Chicago represents. We must no longer believe that the police and the people of Chicago can't get along. We can no longer believe that we can't do anything about the killings and street drugs in Chicago. We can no longer believe that there is nothing we can do about men and women sleeping on the streets of Chicago. We can no longer believe that only some children can get a high quality education. We can no longer believe that Blacks can't qualify to join the unions. We can no longer believe that people standing on the streets of Chicago prefer the streets over a job. We can no longer believe that vacant lots and abandoned buildings are acceptable.

Chicago is beautiful and is rich with resources, and in Chicago no one will be left behind, everyone in Chicago will learn, everyone who is able to work will work, everyone will be safe - and **that is what One Chicago feels like!** We can do this - we will do this - for the love of Chicago. **Together, we can to make One Chicago – Powered by People!**

For more information, visit www.fordforchicago.com or email onechicago@fordforchicago.com.