



## ***Press Release***

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### **State Rep. and Mayoral Candidate La Shawn K. Ford to Announce Plan to Address Surge in Youth Violence**

**(CHICAGO)** – For the past month, stories about Chicago youth engaging in at-risk or deviant behavior has dominated the local news stream. Just this week, a 19-year-old was shot and killed when he attempted to rob a woman who was waiting for a bus on the South Side. During the holiday season, a group of teens attacked CTA passengers on the Red Line. And, because of destructive and dangerous behavior that occurred when large groups of unsupervised teens congregated on the Mag Mile, the Water Tower Place instituted a curfew on Friday and Saturday nights for unaccompanied minors.

This recent surge in youth violence across Chicago has the city on edge. While the natural instinct of most elected officials and many community residents is to call the police, State Representative and Mayoral Candidate La Shawn Ford is announcing his platform to empower youth and call for more resources specifically designated for youth.

“The destructive behavior and dangerous incidents we’ve seen recently are a clear sign that our inner-city youth are troubled and need immediate help,” says Ford. “As a candidate for Chicago mayor, listening to youth and working to create viable solutions for the violence is an important part of my mayoral platform.”

Ford says that inequalities in the education system are partly to blame for the violence. The youth-focused aspects of his platform focus on eliminating inequities in Chicago's broken education system and strategies to develop safer communities. Specifically, his plan calls for:

- Converting closed Chicago Public Schools buildings into community centers.
- Expanding CPS wrap-around services for students and families, including counseling, and school-based health, arts, sports, and other enrichment activities.
- Expanding young adult education opportunities through technical and trade schools.
- Increased access to mental and behavioral services.
- Treatment for substance use disorders.

After spending six years teaching social studies to elementary school students and coaching basketball in the Chicago Public Schools system, Ford knows first-hand that Chicago's public education system is failing children and that it has been spiraling downward for far too long. Back in 2015, the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) issued *A Just Chicago* report which showed that Chicago's issues in education "are deeply connected to housing, healthcare, justice, and jobs." Unfortunately, seven years later, these same issues continue to plague our education system.

"The City of Chicago is failing both the taxpayers and youth who deserve to live in a city that provides safe communities, high-quality education, and the opportunity to live healthy and productive lives," explains Ford. "The problems we are seeing with youth and in our education system extend far beyond parental involvement, a teacher, a student, and a school system. The root causes are part of a larger problem tied to issues of poverty, lack of equitable investment in all our neighborhoods, unemployment, structural racism, violence, and the ultimate displacement of so many of our families. These are the issues I will address as mayor of Chicago." For more details on mayoral candidate La Shawn Ford's full policy issues, visit [www.FordforChicago.com](http://www.FordforChicago.com).

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