

Press Release...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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Ford Launches Move-on Petition for Broadband Access

CHICAGO – As the COVID-19 public health crisis keeps students out of the classroom, State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford, D-Chicago, is focusing on the importance of ensuring all families have access to affordable, high-speed internet so that student may continue their education from home.

“With traditional school buildings closed for the foreseeable future, learning over the internet is the only way students may continue their education with their teachers,” Ford said. “I’m concerned that the pandemic has put some students in a losing situation. They will ultimately fall behind without adequate access to the internet and other resources. There is currently already a divide between children who have access to the internet and technology and those who do not. This crisis is only making the difference starker.”

Ford is encouraging the state to prioritize increasing broadband access in the coming months to communities not yet connected. Last year, Illinois began a \$420 million statewide expansion of broadband infrastructure. Ford wants to make sure that low-income areas are not left behind. Ford has drafted legislative language to provide broadband services at no cost to all residents of the state. Priority will be given to areas with high levels of poverty and lack the infrastructure to receive high-speed internet access.

“Illinois can no longer ignore the need to make sure every community has the necessary infrastructure in place to provide affordable broadband internet access to all families,” Ford said. “Our ongoing pandemic could keep schools closed going into the next school year, let’s take action now.”

Ford has started a petition to highlight the need to expand broadband access for education. It is in Ford’s hopes that the signatures on the petition will show Governor JB Pritzker and the General Assembly that it is crucially important to close the digital divide in Illinois.

The petition can be found at the following link: [Expand Broadband Access for Education](#)

For general information on the state’s response to COVID-19, please visit coronavirus.illinois.gov.

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