

La Shawn K. ford - Personal Background

Born to an unwed teenage mother in the Cabrini-Green housing projects in Chicago, never knowing his father, and adopted by his grandmother at birth, La Shawn K. Ford started his life with few material advantages. When he was two, Ford's family moved into a two-flat family building at Leclaire and Chicago Avenues in the Austin community on the West Side of Chicago. Through hard work, love, and tenacity, his family provided him a chance to attend the school across the street, Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Elementary School. They overcame further challenges when a fire gutted the family home when he was seven, causing Ford and other family members to live with relatives for some time on the South Side of Chicago in the Back of the Yards/Englewood community.

Ford learned the value of hard work and made money for his family by shoveling snow, mowing lawns, collecting bottles and cans for recycling, and stocking produce in the local grocery store. Because of his drive to help people even at an early age, Ford was called "The Alderman" in the neighborhood.

Incorporating the values taught by his church and school, and being a good student, Ford enrolled in another Catholic school, Weber High School. After high school, Ford became the first in his family to attend a four-year college when he entered Niles College Seminary, and he contemplated becoming a priest. After a year, he entered Loyola University, where he played on the basketball team and earned a Bachelor of Science in Education with a minor in Political Science.

For six years, Ford taught social studies to elementary school students and coached basketball in the Chicago Public Schools at Bridge Elementary on the Northwest Side and worked as a Precinct Captain in the neighborhood where he grew up.

As a licensed Real Estate Broker, he then decided to pursue his goal of opening his own business in real estate, and he achieved that goal by becoming the founder and owner of Ford Desired Real Estate, providing services to hundreds of clients since 2001. He is also an Illinois Licensed Insurance Agent and continues to be licensed as a teacher. He lives in the Austin community where he grew up and is the proud father of his daughter, Tia.

Political History and Philosophy

In 2006, campaigning on the theme **"Building Bridges to Success,"** La Shawn K. Ford earned the opportunity to represent the people of the Eighth District by winning a seat in the Illinois House of Representatives. His victory marked the beginning of a long career defined by accessibility, hard work, and deep commitment to the communities he serves.

Since then, voters have repeatedly renewed their trust in him — re-electing him in 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2022, and 2024 — and electing him as a delegate to the **2012, 2016, and 2024 Democratic National Conventions.**

Representing one of the most diverse districts in Illinois — including the West Side of Chicago and the suburbs of Oak Park, Berwyn, North Riverside, Forest Park, Proviso Township, Brookfield, La Grange Park, La Grange, and Western Springs — Ford has consistently focused on issues that matter to working families.

He reaches residents through his radio shows on **WVON 1690 and WCPT 820 ("Chicago HEAL")**, his cable TV program on CAN-TV, his weekly "As I See It" columns, town halls, neighborhood meetings, and direct engagement across the district — making him one of the **most accessible and community-connected leaders in Illinois.**

His town halls have addressed early childhood education, school improvement, IDOT job opportunities, concealed-carry legislation, school governance, cannabis reform, senior issues, public safety, utilities, unemployment challenges, small business support, veterans' needs, foster care and adoption, menthol reduction efforts, violence prevention, and the heroin/opioid epidemic. Ford also helped create the **Parents Political University**, a grassroots effort that empowers families to shape policy and community action.

Throughout his tenure, Ford has championed **social justice**, **equity**, and **expanded opportunity**, driving legislation that advances jobs, education, health, second chances for returning citizens, small business development, housing, and veterans' services. He has consistently upheld the constitutional principles of eliminating poverty and inequality, ensuring legal and economic justice, and expanding opportunity for all.