
HANNAH NEWS UPDATE: Black Caucus Plans to Address Racial Justice Issues in Veto Session

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Members of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus gathered at the Westside Justice Center in Chicago Tuesday to announce the creation of a legislative agenda to address systemic racial and economic injustice in light of continuing protests around the country focused on policing and racial justice issues.

"I'm happy. I'm shaken, but I'm happy. This moment in time is presenting us with unlimited opportunity to, at long last, address systemic racism and oppression that has plagued our communities for generations. It has infiltrated our systems of government, our laws, our criminal justice system, our education system, and our economy. Just not at the federal level, but at all levels," said Senate Majority Leader and caucus chair Kimberly Lightford (D-Chicago).

Lightford said the caucus plans to roll out a legislative agenda that would promote equity, fairness, and opportunity for all marginalized communities, with hopes that action could take place during the upcoming fall veto session as more details of their agenda fall into place.

The caucus' proposals will fall into four categories: criminal justice reform, violence reduction, and police accountability; education and workforce development; economic access, equity, and opportunity; and health care and human services.

Lightford said the caucus is spearheading multiple legislative hearings on these issues, the first of which took place following Tuesday's press conference in a joint meeting of the Senate Criminal Law Committee and the Senate Special Committee on Public Safety on police training and use of force.

Tuesday's press conference featured multiple members of the caucus sharing their experiences encountering racial injustice, as well as civil rights attorney Brendan Shiller and Chicago Community Bond Fund Campaign Coordinator Malik Alim.

Senate President Don Harmon (D-Oak Park) praised the caucus' announcement in a statement.

"The Black Caucus is showing us the path to a better Illinois. I look forward to being an ally and helping win approval of needed reforms," Harmon said.

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