

Safe and Strong Communities

Born in Little Village, and raising my family in the district, I am committed to building strong and safe communities. Violence and crime affect every aspect of our communities—from employment and housing to health and education. As your State Representative, I will promote a comprehensive approach to public safety. Along with traditional public safety programs, we must also provide better education and more employment programs, provide more affordable housing, and ensure people have jobs and can support their families. That is what will make our communities and our families safer and stronger.

As our economy struggles, so do our families and communities. Rising unemployment is too often met with rising crime. In response, we must ensure our approaches to public safety are effective and efficient. We have learned that increased incarceration does not always result in increased safety. Between 1970 and 2008, Illinois' prison population grew by 500 percent—from 7,326 to 45,548, with an additional 32,594 on parole—yet crime rates remain steady. To truly reduce crime, we must address the root causes, not just the symptoms, of violence and crime.

My Policy Priorities Include:

Community Leadership: Strong communities are safer communities. As your State Representative, I will support local leadership by securing resources, provide training and being an advocate for block clubs, parent organizations, homeowner associations, service providers and non-profit organizations across the district. I will ensure youth have positive and productive alternatives to gangs and crime by investing in after-school programs, job training, and youth employment opportunities.

Support Those Who Serve: Police put their lives on the line to protect our families every day. While budgets are tight, we must continue to invest in public safety to ensure our police are effectively trained to work with diverse communities and efficiently deployed to reduce violence in high crime areas. As your State Representative, I will ensure they have the resources and support they need to protect and serve our communities.

Invest in Proven Programs: While the state spends over 5% of the state budget on public safety—too many of our communities remain unsafe. We must invest in programs that work. These programs include mentoring partnerships, evidence-based community programs proven to reduce shootings and killings by 45% and the “Walking School Buses” program, which brings community members together to provide youth with safe access to and from high schools. As your State Representative, I will increase investment in evidence-based street level intervention programs and expand youth intervention and support programs that work with high-risk populations at the community level to reduce violence.

Improve Re-Entry and Reduce Recidivism: Every year, over 40,000 ex-offenders are released back to our communities—over half to Cook County. Over half of them re-offend within three years (recidivate). Ex-offenders are our family members, friends and neighbors. Supporting ex-offenders make our communities safer and stronger. We must improve the state's prisoner rehabilitation, release and re-entry programs—and remove education and employment barriers—to reduce recidivism and stabilize our communities. As your State Representative, I will work with state agencies, parole officers, re-entry service providers, non-profit organizations and communities to support our ex-offender population, stabilize our families and increase safety in our district and across the state.