GRASSROOTS HUMAN RIGHTS
POLICY GUIDE FOR RACIAL EQUITY:
ILLINOIS 2010

The United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations
“Real change can only come through the people we represent. That is why we must do the hard work to lay the groundwork for progress in our own capitals ... And this is why we must champion those principles which ensure that governments reflect the will of the people. These principles cannot be afterthoughts—democracy and human rights are essential ... Among those rights is the freedom to speak your own mind and worship as you please; the promise of equality of the races, and the opportunity for women and girls to pursue their own potential; the ability of citizens to have a say in how they are governed, and to have confidence in the administration of justice. For just as no nation should be forced to accept the tyranny of another nation, no individual should be forced to accept the tyranny of their own government.”

—President Barack Obama, speech to the United Nations General Assembly, September 23, 2009

The United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations (UCCRO) is a grassroots-led multiethnic human rights alliance mobilizing people, policy, and ideals to drive societal transformation and forge unity for the equitable advancement of marginalized communities. We believe that all Illinoisans have the right to be healthy, wealthy, safe, educated, and employed, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, age, income, or citizenship status. Illinois’ immigrant families and communities of color have been divided, disinvested and destroyed through inhumane and inequitable policies and practices. We call on Illinois’ elected officials and community leaders to join the United Congress in its commitment to proactively address the state’s growing racial disparities and ensure equity and justice for all. www.unitedcongress.org
What is the Grassroots Human Rights Policy Guide for Racial Equity?
The Grassroots Human Rights Policy Guide for Racial Equity offers legislators a blueprint for promoting human rights and producing racially equitable outcomes for the people of Illinois. This policy guide—published by the United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations and the Applied Research Center—was developed by over 1,000 grassroots leaders from racial and religious communities throughout the state, as well as key policy advocates, researchers, and academics.

The Illinois Constitution articulates the importance of human rights and racial equity values, including liberty, justice, and opportunity for all Illinois residents:

“We, the People of the State of Illinois - grateful to Almighty God for … civil, political and religious liberty… in order to provide for the health, safety and welfare of the people; maintain a representative and orderly government; eliminate poverty and inequality; assure legal, social and economic justice; provide opportunity for the fullest development of the individual … and secure the blessings of freedom and liberty to ourselves and our posterity - do ordain and establish this Constitution for the State of Illinois.”

(Illinois State Constitution. Preamble.)

Our elected and appointed officials must partner with grassroots communities—across racial and religious lines—to step up to this constitutional calling to ensure a happy and healthy future for all Illinoisans.

What are Human Rights and Racial Equity?

Human Rights are the rights with which all people are born—including the right to a quality education, the right to food and shelter, the right to be free from discrimination, and the right to a quality of life that meets basic human needs and respects each person’s human dignity.

Racial Equity is a standard for policies that produce fair and equitable treatment, opportunities, and outcomes across communities. Racial equity is not about diversity or equal inputs; it addresses the cumulative effects of past and present inequities to produce fair and measurable outcomes for everyone.

Human Rights and Racial Equity are interconnected. People of color are disproportionately subjected to human rights violations. Racial inequities, racial violence, and discrimination are human rights violations.

Human Rights and Civil Rights are different. Human rights include civil rights—those provided by government—as well as a broader range of social, cultural, and economic rights not currently guaranteed under U.S. laws, which must be strengthened to meet international human rights standards.

Why are Human Rights and Racial Equity Important to Illinois?

Across the state, the existence and persistence of racial inequities deny families their human rights and human needs. In the current economic climate, the compounding racial inequities produced by unfair school funding, an unjust criminal justice system, growing wage and wealth gaps, and lack of access to affordable health care and housing impose cumulative consequences on people of color—and the state as a whole—like never before. To protect the human rights and human needs of all people the state must promote policies that address these racial disparities.

• Between 2001 and 2008, the average Illinoisan experienced a decline in inflation-adjusted wages, while the cost of basic necessities increased by over 20 percent. In 2008, Black and Latino worker in Illinois earned $0.79 and $0.68 respectively for every $1.00 earned by a white worker.
Human rights values, laws, and documents—recognized and ratified here at home and around the world—provide principles and standards that could strengthen state and federal policies in the U.S.

**Universality:** Human rights are for all people. Rights—and the resources necessary to meet the human needs of all people—must be accessible and allocated equitably. No one should be denied their human rights.

**Indivisibility:** Rights are interconnected—they cannot be divided. The rights to housing and education are linked to the rights to a fair wage and health care. Denial of any right violates an individual’s human rights.

**Equity and Non-Discrimination:** All people are entitled to fair treatment. Racial inequities should be remedied through policies that consciously consider and seek to eliminate negative racial impacts.

**Participation and Self-Determination:** People and communities have the right to decide their own futures. Direct-stakeholders—those most affected by policies—must be informed about and involved in policies and program decisions that affect their families and communities.

**Family Unity and Community Stability:** The integrity of families—those we relate to and rely on—must be supported and sustained. Protections must be in place against disinvestment, displacement, and other forms of discrimination that divide families and destabilize communities.

• The proportion of uninsured Illinoisans grew from 10.9 percent in 1990 to 13 percent in 2007-8. People of color are 35 percent of the state but 51 percent of the state’s uninsured.

• People of color make up nearly three-fourths of the prison population and nearly two-thirds of Illinoisans with past criminal convictions. It is estimated that Black prisoners from Cook County alone generate more than $500 million in economic development investment for the predominantly white down-state communities where prison facilities are located.

The impact that racially equitable policymaking could have is unprecedented—the future of the entire state, not just communities of color, depend on our efforts.

**Grassroots Human Rights and Racial Equity Standards**

The following standards give policymakers a tangible guide for evaluating the impact of legislation on different communities and how to be more accountable to their constituents.

**Right to Human Dignity and Human Needs:** Does this policy recognize the human dignity of all people? Are the rights, resources, and protections everyone needs to access health care, housing, education, and income ample, accessible, and equitably allocated? Does this policy exclude any individual or group from developing their full human potential or meeting their basic human needs?

**Right to Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes:** Does this policy account for and advance fair treatment, equal opportunity, and equitable outcomes for all communities? Has a racial impact assessment been conducted? Will this policy work to eliminate systemic social inequities and prevent unintended consequences?

**Right to Inclusion and Participation:** Does this legislation fulfill the right to equal representation and promote enfranchisement and full participation—especially for direct and disadvantaged stakeholders? Are information and processes accessible so that all communities can make informed decisions?

**Right to Stable and Sustainable Families and Communities:** Does this policy support and sustain the integrity of families and communities? Does this policy promote the rights of all people to live in a safe and healthy environment, protected from racial violence, racial profiling, pollution, and other destabilizing or discriminatory practices?

**Right to Government Accountability and Human Rights Enforcement:** Does this policy provide ample methods and measures for public participation and reporting, and fair methods to ensure transparency, enforceability, and accountability? Are there realistic goals, timetables, appropriations and safeguards to ensure equity and protect the rights of all people?

**Building a Grassroots Human Rights and Racial Equity Movement**

Grassroots communities are coming together across racial and religious lines to define their own destinies. While we will continue to organize in our own neighborhoods, we have united to promote a progressive policy platform at the state and federal levels to ensure equity for all communities and human rights for all people.

Over the next year, hundreds of leaders from every corner of this state will board buses to Springfield to advocate for human rights and racially equitable policies. We will educate our legislators at the capitol and in-district, holding them accountable to the principles and priorities we present in this policy guide.

This is just the beginning. The United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations and the communities and organizations with which we work are building a grassroots multiethnic movement—mobilizing people around the issues most important to them. We are promoting policies that recognize our human dignity, connect our community issues, and speak to our shared values.

Together, we are moving this vision of human rights and racial equity forward. Please join us.
Grassroots Human Rights and Racial Equity Policy Priorities

This policy guide profiles 49 proposed state and federal policies as of February 5, 2010—and policy ideas—that, if passed, would have the most positive or negative impacts on racial equity and human rights. These policy priorities cut across the issues of criminal justice, economic justice, education equity, fiscal fairness, health equity, housing equity, and immigrant rights. Additional information—including new and amended bills, legislative updates, and action alerts—is available at www.unitedcongress.org/policyguide.

**Criminal Justice**
- PS: Redistricting Prisoners: HB 4650 (Ford)
- PS: Abolishing the Death Penalty: SR 260 (Delgado)/HR 262 (Yarbrough)
- PS: Increasing Minimum Age for Juvenile Detention: HB 2463 (Hamos)
- PI: State Sanctioned Reintegration Plan for All Ex-Offenders
- PI: Racial and Fiscal Impact Accountability
- PI: Abolish Life Sentences without Possibility of Parole for Juveniles
- PF: Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization S.678 (Leahy-VT)
- NS: DNA Racial Profiling: HB 935 (Mendoza/Murphy)

**Economic Justice**
- PS: Increasing Working Family Tax Credits: SB 1562 (Collins)/HB 2319 (Davis)
- PS: Payday Loan Regulation: SB 655 (Lightford)/HB 3901 (Hamos)
- PS: Affordable Childcare: SB 1786 (Hunter)
- PI: Additional Public Benefits
- PI: Employment Opportunities for Youth
- PI: Children’s Savings Accounts
- PF: Employee Free Choice Act: HR.1409 (Miller)/S.560 (Kennedy)

**Education Equity**
- PS: Equitable School Funding: HB 174 (Miller/Cullerton)
- PS: Extend Preschool for All: SB 2594 (Lightford)
- PI: Local School Council Capacity
- PI: Social Supports and Parental Engagement in Schools
- PI: Making Capital Funds More Accessible and Equitable
- PF: Ex-Offender Access to Higher Education: HR.3295 (Frank-MA)
- NS: School Vouchers: SB 2494 (Meeks)

**Fiscal Fairness**
- PI: Raise the Illinois Income Tax
- PI: Increase the Earned Income Tax Credit
- PI: Establish an Illinois Child Tax Credit
- PI: Expand the Base of the Sales Tax
- PI: Increase Personal Exemption

**Health Equity**
- PS: Equitable Access to Healthy Food: SJR 72 (Collins)
- PS: Community Health Center Expansion: SB 150 (Clayborne/Feigenholtz)
- PI: Building Healthy Communities
- PI: Medicaid Coverage for Translation and Interpretation Services
- PI: Removing Language and Cultural Barriers
- PI: Expanding School-Based Health Centers
- PF: Access to Affordable Health Care: H.R.3962 (Dingell-MI)/H.R.3590 (Rangel-NY)

**Housing Equity**
- PI: Foreclosure Mediation, Education and Prevention
- PI: Adjust Affordability Standards
- PI: Promote Access to Federal Housing Supports
- PI: Discrimination Protections for Seniors
- PI: Source of Income Protections
- PI: National Housing Trust Fund Allocation
- PF: Community Reinvestment Modernization: HR.1479 (Johnson-TX)

**Immigrant Rights**
- PI: Increase Investment in Bilingual Education
- PI: Expanding Language Access Programs
- PF: Comprehensive Immigration Reform: HR.4321 (Ortiz-TX)
- PF: Opportunities for Immigrant Students: HR.1751 (Berman-CA)/S.729 (Durbin-IL)
- NS: Immigrant Exclusion: HB 4142 (Ramey Jr.)
- NS: Deputizing for Deportation: HB1147 (Ramey Jr.)
- NF: E-verify: HR.662 (Giffords-AZ)
- NF: Extending USA Patriot Act: S.1692 (Leahy-VT)
How to Conduct a Human Rights and Racial Equity Policy Assessment

Example of a Negative Human Rights and Racial Equity Bill: DNA Arrests Bill SB 935

Amends the Criminal Code of 1961. Provides that the offense of obstructing justice also includes destroying, altering, concealing, disguising, or otherwise tampering with samples collected for DNA fingerprinting analysis. Provides that the offense is a Class 3 felony. Amends the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1963 and the Unified Code of Corrections. Provides that every person arrested for committing a felony shall have a sample of his or her saliva or tissue taken for DNA fingerprinting analysis, at the time of booking, for the purpose of determining identity and for certain other specified purposes. Provides that subject to appropriation, the Department of State Police shall implement this provision. Provides that this provision becomes operative no later than the earlier of the following: (1) the date on which the Department of State Police informs law enforcement agencies that the Department is ready to collect samples; or (2) January 1, 2013. Provides that in the amendatory changes to the Unified Code of Corrections, intentionally using genetic marker grouping analysis information derived from a DNA sample beyond authorized uses is a Class 3 rather than a Class 4 felony. Provides that the identification, detention, arrest, or conviction of a person based upon a database match or database information is not invalidated if it is later determined that the sample should not have been obtained or placed in the database. Effective immediately.

House Floor Amendment No. 1

Deletes redundant language in provision providing for the expungement of the DNA record for a conviction when a court reverses a conviction based on actual innocence or a pardon is granted based on actual innocence of the person convicted.

1*
This would permit the taking of DNA from anyone arrested of a crime.
• Racial profiling is a problem in Illinois. In 2008, Illinois motorists of color were stopped at a rate 13 percent higher than white drivers. This practice will disproportionately violate the rights of people of color, with broader community effects. This would violate the Right to Human Dignity and Human Needs, the Right to Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes and the Right to Safe and Stable Communities.

2*
This would allow DNA samples, that should not have been obtained, to continue to be valid.
• To have improperly collected evidence—largely collected from people of color—used against individuals is a further violation of human rights. And because of racial profiling, this will likely disproportionately violate the rights of people of color. This would violate the Right to Human Dignity and Human Needs, the Right to Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes and the Right to Safe and Stable Communities.

3*
This would expunge the DNA record if one is found innocent or granted a pardon.
• This is good, but does not remedy the fact that their DNA should not have been collected in the first place, or that the use of this DNA could still be utilized even if the person whose DNA has been found innocent. This amendment does not address the much larger human rights and racial equity problems of this proposed bill. This would violate the Right to Human Dignity and Human Needs, the Right to Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes and the Right to Safe and Stable Communities.
Example of a Positive Human Rights and Racial Equity Bill: School Funding Equity HB 174

Senate Floor Amendment No. 2
Deletes everything after the enacting clause. Amends the State Budget Law of the Civil Administration Code of Illinois. Provides that certain amounts shall be transferred from the General Revenue Fund to the Common School Fund. Amends the Illinois Income Tax Act. Increases the income tax rate for individuals, trusts, and estates from 3 percent to 5 percent. Increases the income tax rate for corporations from 4.8 percent to 7.2 percent. [1*] Increases the residential real property tax credit from 5 percent to 10 percent. Increases the limitation on the education expense credit from $500 to $1,000. Increases the percentage of the earned income tax credit from 5 percent of the federal tax credit to 15 percent in 2009 and thereafter. [2*] Makes changes concerning distributions to the Local Government Distributive Fund. Amends the Retailers’ Occupation Tax Act. Provides that certain services are taxable under the Act. [3*] Amends the School Code. Creates the Education Financial Award System Fund, the Digital Learning Technology Grant Fund, and the STEM Education Center Grant Fund. [4*]

1* This would increase income taxes to 5 percent.
   • This would be a progressive way of taxing people so that people who make more, pay more. This would provide more equity and fairness in how Illinoisans are taxed. This would reinforce the Right to Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes.
   • This would generate more revenue for the state to pay for education, and other much needed social services for communities. This would reinforce the Right to Human Dignity and Human Needs and the Right to Stable and Sustainable Families and Communities.

2* This would increase tax credits, including the earned income tax credit (EITC).
   • This would provide important tax relief for working families, providing more equity and fairness in how Illinoisans are taxed. This would reinforce the Right to Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes.
   • This would create new education funds. These funds would help bridge inequities in technology, science and math programs that many students of color have less access to.
   • This has implications on the Right to Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes.

3* This would expand the number of services that are taxable. The full bill text lists luxury services like travel agents, tanning parlors, interior design services, membership fees to private clubs, limousine services, and marina (boat) services.
   • This is good if it taxes only luxury services, which are used by wealthier people. If this includes basic services that families use to meet their human needs like food and gas, this is not a good tax. This would have implications on the Right to Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes.

Senate Floor Amendment No. 4
In the State aid formula provisions of the School Code, provides that the foundation level of support of $6,190 is for the 2009-2010 (instead of 2010-2011) school year. [5*] Provides that moneys that are transferred to the Common School Fund instead of the Local Government Distributive Fund [6*] shall be transferred until July 1, 2010 (instead of July 1, 2009).

Senate Floor Amendment No. 5
Increases the corporate income tax rate from 4.8 percent to 5 percent (instead of 7.2 percent). [7*]… (for full text, see www.ilga.gov)

5* This would increase the education foundation level amount.
   • This would increase the amount of school funding students in poorer school districts receive. Illinois’ wealthiest school districts spend up to $19,000 more per pupil than the poorest school districts—77 percent of students attending the state’s poorest school districts are students of color. This would reinforce the Right to Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes, the Right to Stable and Sustainable Communities, as well as the Right to Human Dignity and Human Needs.

6* This would put money into the Common School Fund, instead of the Local Government Distributive Fund.
   • This would ensure that school funds will be allocated to school districts more equitably, and that poorer school districts will get more of their fair share of school funds. This would reinforce the Right to Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes, the Rights to Stable and Sustainable Communities, as well as the right to Human Dignity and Human Needs.

7* This would decrease the corporate income tax amount from 7.2% to 5%.
   • This would not be good because it would decrease the corporate income tax rate, which taxes wealthier people. An increase to 7.2% would have been better. But it is still good, because it would increase this tax from the current 4.8% rate to 5%. This will reinforce the Right to Equitable Opportunities and Outcomes.
Over 35 percent of Illinois’ 12.9 million residents are people of color. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity forecasts the majority of the state’s population will be people of color by 2050.

**Latinos**
There are nearly 1.97 million Latinos in Illinois. This number grew by 29 percent between 2000 and 2008. Latinos are projected to account for nearly 40 percent of Illinois’ population growth between 2000 and 2030.

**Asian/Pacific Islanders**
The number of Asian and Pacific Islanders (API) in Illinois has grown to over 570,000. This was a 32 percent increase between 2000 and 2008. The API population is projected to double to over one million by 2030.

**Blacks**
There are nearly 1.9 million Blacks in Illinois. Since 2000, the Black population increased by four percent. Blacks are projected to remain approximately 15 percent of the population through 2030.

**American Indians**
There are over 59,000 American Indians in Illinois. This population grew by 217 percent between 2000 and 2008. While Illinois has the 3rd largest American Indian population in the country, there are no federally recognized tribes in the state.

**Whites**
There are over 10 million whites in Illinois. This number grew by 21 percent between 2000 and 2008. By 2050, whites are projected to be less than half of the state population.

**Immigrants**
Nearly 1.78 million Illinois residents were foreign born. The state’s immigrant population increased by about 15 percent between 2000 and 2008. Illinois has the 5th largest immigrant population in the nation.
**Criminal Justice**

**Criminal Justice is a Human Rights Issue.** Illinois hosts one of the most racially disparate criminal justice systems in the country for both adults and juveniles. While Illinois crime rates remained steady between 1970 and 2008, and the population grew by 16 percent, Illinois’ prison population skyrocketed by 500 percent—growing from 7,326 to 45,548 with an additional 32,594 on parole. Policies that redefined many low-level non-violent drug crimes as felonies and as deportable offenses have produced growing racial disparities. Illinois’ adult and juvenile prison populations are 72 and 66 percent people of color, respectively. This approach has not reduced crime levels or recidivism—over half of Illinois prisoners return to prison within three years. Mass incarceration has destroyed families and destabilized communities, with devastating racial and fiscal consequences for the state.

A broad range of policies, procedures, and practices is needed to eliminate bias, focus on prevention, and create effective alternatives to incarceration. Diversion programs—like drug treatment programs—deal with the root causes of crime by investing in education and rehabilitative services that will best address crime and violence for families and communities. Discriminatory practices—from racial profiling and prosecutorial misconduct to barriers to employment and education for ex-offenders—must be reformed to eliminate some of the state’s most egregious human rights violations.

**Racial Disparities Related to Criminal Justice**

**Racially Disparate System**
- People of color make up over one-third of the state’s population, yet nearly three-fourths of the prison population and nearly two-thirds of Illinoisans with past criminal convictions.
- Youth of color make up 42 percent of the youth population, yet 66 percent of the juvenile prison population.
- In 2002, the recidivism rate was 52 percent for adults and 48 percent for juveniles. In 2001, the recidivism rates were 59 and 42 percent for Blacks and Latinos, respectively (not including juveniles who entered the adult system).

**Racially Discriminatory Practices**
- While studies show that drug use and sales are equally distributed across race, nearly 90 percent of Illinoisans incarcerated for drug offenses are Black. Blacks charged with a drug related offense in this state were 57 times more likely than whites to be confined in a correctional facility.
- Black, American Indian and Latino motorists are 25, 20 and 10 percent more likely to be stopped by police than their proportion of the driving population would suggest. White motorists, in contrast, are 5 percent less likely to be stopped than would be expected.
- Prosecutorial and police errors, false confessions, police torture, and racial profiling contribute to Illinois’ high level of wrongful convictions. Illinois has the highest number of people exonerated by DNA evidence in non-capital cases.

**Fiscal and Racial Costs**
- Illinois appropriated $1,328,357 for the Department of Corrections in FY 2009—4.7 percent of the state’s total General Fund.
- U.S. Census data is used to allocate over $14 billion annually in federal funds throughout Illinois. The majority of the state’s over 32,000 prisoners of color are counted toward the population totals of the predominantly white areas where most Illinois prisons are located—not in the communities of color where most prisoners of color come from and to which they are most likely to return. This practice drains vital resources from communities of color, diverting the resources to predominantly white communities.
- It is estimated that Black prisoners from Cook County generate more than $500 million in economic development investment for predominantly white down-state communities where prison facilities are located.

**Summary of Criminal Justice Bills**

**State Bills With Positive Impacts**
- Redistricting Prisoners: HB 4650 (Ford)
- Abolishing the Death Penalty: SR 260 (Delgado)/ HR 262 (Yarbrough)
- Increasing Minimum Age for Juvenile Detention: HB 2463 (Hamos)

**State Policy Ideas With Positive Impacts**
- State-Sanctioned Reintegration Plan for All Ex-Offenders
- Racial and Fiscal Impact Accountability
- Abolish Life Sentences without the Possibility of Parole for Juveniles

**Federal Level Bills With Positive Impacts**
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency PreventionReauthorization S. 678 (Leahy)

**State Bills With Negative Impacts**
- DNA Racial Profiling: HB 935 (Mendoza/Murphy)
Redistricting Prisoners: HB 4650 (Ford)
There are 32,000 people of color incarcerated in Illinois. The U.S. Census, which is used for redistricting, counts prisoners as residents of the predominantly white communities where most prisons are located, not the communities of color where prisoners are from and to which they are most likely to return. This practice transfers political power and representation away from communities of color and reapportions political power to prison communities, where prisoners cannot vote, violating the principle of one person, one vote and the right to equal representation. HB 4650 would create the Prisoner Census Adjustment Act, requiring state and local governments to use census figures adjusted to reflect the pre-incarceration addresses of Illinois’ state and federal prisoners in creating election districts and redistricting.

HB 4650: Referred to Rules Committee

Abolishing the Death Penalty: SR 260 (Delgado)/HR 262 (Yarbrough)
The death penalty is inhumane and unjust. Worldwide, 137 of 194 countries have abolished the death penalty by law or in practice—a human rights standard required for nations to enter the European Union. Ninety-three percent of the world’s executions are administered by the United States. In 2000, former Illinois Governor George Ryan declared a moratorium on executions after 13 death row inmates were exonerated—seven more have been exonerated since—the second highest number in the nation. Roughly 90 percent of Illinois capital defendants are people of color. SR 260 and HR 262 would abolish the death penalty in Illinois.

SR 260: Pursuant to Senate Rule 3-9(b) / Referred to Assignments
HR 262: Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

Increasing Minimum Age for Juvenile Detention: HB 2463 (Hamos)
The Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that “…arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child… shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.” In 2007, 14,154 Illinois youths (10-16 years old) were admitted to secure detention—59 percent were Black, 11 percent were Latino, 0.1 percent were Asian, 0.05 percent were Native American, and 1.7 percent were multiracial. Among them were 1,429 youth ages 10-13. HB 2463 would amend the Juvenile Court Act to increase the minimum age for placing a delinquent minor in a detention facility from 10 to 13, aligning Illinois’ policy with that of the U.S. Department of Justice.

HB 2463: Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee
State-Sanctioned Reintegration Plan for All Ex-Offenders
The Illinois Department of Corrections mission statement assures “…offenders of their constitutional rights and maintains programs to enhance the success of offenders’ reentry into society.” In 2005, over 43,000 adults and juveniles returned to their communities from prison—92 percent of the adults and 65 percent of the juveniles released were people of color. Studies show that within one year of release, up to 75 percent of ex-offenders remain unemployed. Over 60 percent of Black and 40 percent of Latino ex-offenders return to prison. A state-sanctioned reintegration plan for all ex-offenders would be the first such plan in the nation; it would provide economic and social stability for families and communities and save the state millions of dollars.

Racial and Fiscal Impact Accountability
The current system is ineffective; the recidivism rate exceeds 50 percent. Illinois spends nearly 5 percent of the General Revenue Fund, $1.3 billion, to incarcerate over 45,000 people—three-fourths of whom are people of color. Legislation is needed to require racial and fiscal impact statements for policies and procedures that will likely increase the state’s prison population. Racial impact laws have passed in Iowa (HF 2393) and Connecticut (Public Act 08-143). A fiscal impact law in Virginia, where the crime rate is at a 40-year low, saved an estimated $300-400 million in the last year alone because the state incarcerated fewer people.

Abolish Life Sentences without the Possibility of Parole for Juveniles
Sentencing juveniles to lifetime incarceration without the possibility of parole is an inhumane and inappropriate policy. Children lack mental and developmental maturity, and they are capable of growth, reform and rehabilitation. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that “[n]either capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offenses committed by persons below eighteen years of age.” Illinois allows children as young as 13 to be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. Eighty-two percent of the 103 Illinois youth serving life sentences are youth of color—74 are Black and 10 percent are Latino. Ninety-five percent of these cases were transferred to adult court without a hearing. Legislation is needed to abolish life sentences without the possibility of parole for juveniles, including mandatory life sentences, to allow judges to exercise their discretion and consider age in sentencing. This legislation should apply retroactively.

Federal Bills With Positive Impacts

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization
S. 678 (Leahy)
In 2003, Black youth made up 16 percent of the youth in the nation but 37 percent of youth detained and 58 percent of youth admitted to adult prison. In Illinois, Black and Latino youth were detained, respectively, at 7 and 2 times the rate of white youth. S. 678, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act, would promote alternatives to juvenile detention, fund local prevention programs, and collect data on juvenile justice to identify and address racial and ethnic disparities within the juvenile justice system.

S. 678: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 243.
On August, 25th, 1988 my son and I were going to make cookies. On my way back from the store, I was arrested—accused of a murder I didn’t do. I was tortured. The police put a phone book on my head, and beat down on it with a black jack calling me the n-word.” They took the night stick and ground it between my legs. I asked for my lawyer, and was hit over the head with the phone. After 16 hours I knew no lawyer coming. I confessed, and was convicted. In prison, I met these guys and we started connecting our cases—Commander Burge, Officer Kill and Detective Smith were the link—we started the Death Row 10. I worked on my own case for 15 years, connecting with lawyers and activists.

On July 7th, 2009, after 21 years in prison—13 on death row—I was exonerated. My human rights were violated—I was tortured and forced to confess to a crime I never did. Me and my sons, we can’t get those years back. I felt like Yusef from the Qu’ran—I was lied on, imprisoned and forgotten. I’ve built up my faith. Now, I’m taking it one day at a time—it’s hard. The system has to be fixed.” –Ron Kitchen

**DNA Racial Profiling: HB 935 (Mendoza/Murphy)**

HB 935 would require the collection of DNA samples from youth and adults arrested for a felony in Illinois. While DNA records can be expunged after exoneration, prior use of these samples remains valid. Racial profiling is a persistent problem. In Illinois, people of color are 2.5 times more likely than whites to be searched, yet whites are 1.6 times more likely to be found in possession of contraband. Mandating DNA sampling based merely on arrest, without even a crime charged much less a conviction, will arbitrarily and disproportionately violate the rights of people of color. In Britain, similar policies have resulted in DNA collected from 75 percent of the Black male population 18-35 years old—compared to 8 percent of the general population.

HB 517: Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee
HB 935: Pursuant to Senate Rule 3-9(b) / Referred to Assignments

**ILLINOIS INVESTMENT IN EDUCATION VS. INCARCERATION**

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<th>Cost</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>$21,622</strong></td>
<td>to incarcerate an adult in 2005</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>$70,827</strong></td>
<td>to incarcerate a juvenile in 2005</td>
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<td><strong>$6,119</strong></td>
<td>Illinois’ foundation level to educate a child for 2009-2010 school year</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>$10,442</strong></td>
<td>weighted average tuition and fees for Illinois colleges and universities for 2009-2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Racial Disparities Related to Economic Justice

Employment
- The percentage of people of color in the Illinois labor force increased from 15.7 percent in 1980 to 29.5 percent in 2007, when Blacks and Latinos each made up 12.4 percent and Asians made up 4.7 percent of workers.63
- Between December 2007 and May 2009, Illinois’ unemployment rate nearly doubled—from 5.3 percent to 10.1 percent. The unemployment rates for Blacks and Latinos were 16.1 and 11.4 percent respectively, compared to 8.9 percent for whites.64
- Due to the concentration of workers of color in low-paying jobs, a higher percentage of full-time workers of color still live below the poverty line—4.7 percent of Blacks, 5.4 percent of Latinos, and 2.2 percent of Asians, compared to 1.0 percent of whites.65

Racial Wealth and Wage Gaps
- The median net worth of households of color in Illinois is $12,100, compared to $128,400 for white households.66 The net worth of 15 percent of Illinois households is zero or negative, i.e., they owe more than they own.67
- Between 1980 and 2007, inflation-adjusted median hourly wages for whites in Illinois grew by a modest $.55 per hour (3.4 percent), while wages for Blacks declined by $1.37 per hour (-9.4 percent) and wages for Latino workers declined by $0.97 (-7.9 percent).68
- Since 1980, the racial wage gap between Blacks and whites grew by 126 percent; the gap between whites and Latinos grew by nearly 40 percent.69 In 2008, Black and Latino workers in Illinois earned $0.79 and $0.68 respectively for every one dollar earned by white workers.70

Earnings, Enterprise, and Economic Security
- In 2008, median earnings were $25,842 for Black, $23,340 for Latino, $29,331 for American Indian, and $38,802 for Asian workers, compared to $34,429 for white workers.71 Latina women earned the lowest annual median income: $26,319.72
- People of color are 35.3 percent of the state’s population73 but only 16.4 percent of business owners statewide—7.2 percent Black, 4.1 percent Latino, 4.6 percent Asian, 0.4 percent American Indian and 0.1 percent Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.74 These businesses accounted for only 2.4 percent of statewide sales.75
- Businesses owned by people of color account for 35 percent of Chicago businesses,76 generating only 3.9 percent of the city’s business sales.77
- Only 47.3 percent of the state’s Black workers and 36.8 percent of Latino workers had access to an employer-provided pension plan—compared to 56.8 percent of white workers.78

SUMMARY OF ECONOMIC JUSTICE BILLS

State Bills with Positive Impacts
- Increasing Working Family Tax Credits: SB 1562 (Collins)/HB 2319 (Davis)
- Payday Loan Regulation: SB 655 (Lightford)/HB 3901 (Hamos
- Affordable Childcare: SB 1786 (Hunter)

State Policy Ideas with Positive Impacts
- Additional Public Benefits
- Employment Opportunities for Youth
- Children’s Savings Account

Federal Policies with Positive Impacts
- Employee Free Choice Act: HR.1409 (Miller-CA)/S. 560 (Kennedy-MA)
Illinois and International Economic Justice Standards

• “All persons shall have the right to be free from discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, national ancestry and sex in the hiring and promotion practices of any employer or in the sale or rental of property.” (Illinois State Constitution. Article I: Bill of Rights. Section 17: No Discrimination in Employment and the Sale or Rental of Property.)

• “The purpose of this Code is to assist in the alleviation and prevention of poverty and thereby to protect and promote the health and welfare of all the people of this State. To accomplish this purpose, this Code authorizes financial aid and social welfare services for persons in need thereof by reason of unemployment, illness, or other cause depriving them of the means of a livelihood compatible with health and well being … The maintenance and strengthening of the family unit shall be a principal consideration in the administration of this Code.” (Illinois Public Aid Code. Article I: Public Purpose.)

• “Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work… worthy of human dignity… Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights art. 23, Dec. 10, 1948.)

State Bills With Positive Impacts

Increasing Working Family Tax Credits: SB 1562 (Collins)/ HB 2319 (Davis)

Illinois has one of the lowest earned income tax credits (EITC) in the country; the credits in nearby Wisconsin and Minnesota are nearly ten times as much. In 2006, the EITC level provided an average credit of $220 to 765,000 working Illinois families. SB 1562 and HB 2319 would increase the state EITC from 5 percent of the federal credit, to 7.5 percent and eventually 10 percent. This would raise the maximum EITC to $360 and $500. Forty-two percent of households of color are eligible for the EITC.

SB 1562: Rule 3-9(a) / Re-referred to Assignments
HB 2319: Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

Payday Loan Regulation: SB 655 (Lightford)/HB 3901 (Hamos)

Payday loans are high interest, short-term loans that use postdated checks as collateral. Payday lenders have historically targeted minority communities, locating stores in communities of color more than three times as often as in white communities. Illinoisans lose at least $220 million per year in unfair fees to predatory payday lenders. SB 655 and HB 3901 would protect consumers by amending the Payday Loan Reform Act to prohibit lenders from making new loans to consumers with an outstanding balance on two payday loans, or to those whose balance exceeds $1,000 or 25 percent of the consumer’s gross monthly income. The Act would also prohibit lenders from taking a consumer’s personal property as collateral to secure a payday loan.

SB 655: Pursuant to Senate Rule 3-9(b) / Referred to Assignments
HB 3901: Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

Affordable Childcare: SB 1786 (Hunter)

Childcare costs can be a family’s highest expense. In every state, monthly child care fees for two children at any age exceeded the median rent and were nearly as high, or even higher than, the average monthly mortgage payment. Latino and Black mothers pay the greatest proportion of household income for child care—13.3 percent and 9.5 percent respectively. SB 1786 would amend the Illinois Public Aid Code to reduce childcare co-payments—families with countable income below 50 percent of the federal poverty level ($11,025 for a family of four) would pay only $1 per week.

SB 1786: Rule 3-9(a) / Re-referred to Assignments

State Policy Ideas With Positive Impacts

Additional Public Benefits

Illinois, with a gross domestic product that ranks fifth in the country, provides significantly lower public benefit grants than most states with similar median incomes; cash assistance grants come in sixth among seven Midwest states. Cash grants for families with minor children have fallen from 79 percent of the federal poverty level in 1973 to 28.5 percent in 2008. Illinois spends only 8 percent of its federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant funding on TANF cash assistance, the lowest percentage in the country. Nearly 90 percent of Illinoisans who receive TANF are people of color: 82 percent Black, 6 percent Latino and 1 percent other people of
Legislation is needed to provide additional cash assistance to TANF recipients to help lower-income families meet their basic human needs. The TANF Emergency Contingency Fund, created by federal stimulus funding, will match each additional state dollar Illinois spends on TANF cash assistance with $4 of federal funds, so the time is ripe for providing additional cash assistance to TANF recipients.

**Employment Opportunities for Youth**

Youth of color have disproportionately high unemployment rates. Between January and November 2009, there were 72,800 unemployed 16- to 19-year-olds in the state. Nineteen and 30 percent of Black and Latino teens, respectively, held any type of job in 2008 compared to 33 percent of white teens. Legislation is needed to provide and expand employment opportunities for youth. Summer jobs programs administered through community-based organizations give youth crucial job training, life skills, and education counseling as well as opportunities to build leadership and contribute to their communities.

**Children's Savings Accounts**

Children's Savings Accounts (CSAs) are savings and investment accounts established for every child at birth with an initial public investment; the accumulated funds can be used for college or post-secondary training, buying a home, starting a business, or saving for retirement. CSAs provide children and families with financial education and savings incentives; for low-income families contributions to the accounts are matched, providing opportunities for life-long savings and asset building. The asset poverty rates for Black, Latino, Asian, and American Indian children were 56, 44, 15 and 37 percent, respectively—compared to 14 percent for white children. The Children's Savings Accounts Task Force, established in 2007, is expected to meet throughout 2010 to recommend the design and implementation of a CSA plan. Legislation will be needed to establish a CSA program for Illinois families based on the task force’s recommendations.

**Federal Policies With Positive Impacts**

**Employee Free Choice Act: HR.1409 (Miller-CA)/S.560 (Kennedy-MA)**

The right to join a union is a fundamental human right that offers workplace protections and wage benefits for workers across sectors. Statewide, union members earn 15 percent more per week than non-union workers. Black and Latino union members earn nearly 23 percent more than their non-union counterparts. HR.1409 and S.560 would amend the National Labor Relations Act to allow workers to form a union through “card check” procedures, as well as create stronger protections and from employer intimidation after a majority of workers sign unionization cards.

**ILLINOIS SELF-SUFFICIENCY STANDARD**

The self-sufficiency standard measures how much a family—without public or private assistance—requires to meet basic human needs. It takes into account the real costs of housing, food, transportation, health care, household and personal care, and taxes for families of different sizes and in different communities.

According to the standard, a single parent with a preschooler and a school age child in Illinois needs $49,030 a year ($23.22 per hour)—in Chicago the family needs $52,387 ($24.80 per hour). The amount ranges as high as $61,910 ($29.31 per hour) in DuPage County to as low as $26,986 ($12.78 per hour) in Edgar County, all many times higher than the federal poverty standard of $18,310 ($8.61 per hour).

The self-sufficiency standard is a more accurate measure than the federal poverty standard of what families really require to meet their basic needs. The federal government recognizes that 10.6 percent (382,000) of non-senior headed Illinois households experienced poverty but 28.8 percent (1 million) of non-senior households—another 652,000 families—fell below the self-sufficiency standard.

To calculate your own self sufficiency standard, or for more information, go to www.ilselfsufficiency.org

“For the last 2 years I’ve worked about 140 hours a week at three jobs. I work the graveyard shift on the northside of Chicago as an armed security guard. From 11 p.m.-7 a.m., I canvass the building, monitor guests, and move bodies to the morgue. Then I head south to Roseland where I work for an elderly couple as a homecare worker. For 3 hours, I do laundry and housework, take their vitals, and call in their prescriptions. I go home to Chatham for 2 hours to rest, then I go to Melrose Park where I prepare food trays for hospital patients for 4 hours before I head back to the graveyard shift. I make $8.50-$14 an hour at these jobs, with no health benefits. It doesn’t seem right to work in all these hospitals, and have no health care. I take multivitamins and eat healthy to keep up, but one day I fainted. It’s just too much. Everyone deserves a living wage with health care benefits.” –Lisa Robinson
Racial Disparities Related to Education Equity

Racially Inequitable Schools
• 93 percent of the state’s Black students and over 60 percent of its Latino students attend schools in districts where poverty rates exceed 30 percent.102
• Illinois public schools face a shortage of qualified teachers and teachers of color.103 Statewide, 85 percent of Illinois teachers are white.104 Between 1998 and 2006, the percentage of Black teachers in Chicago dropped by 9 percent.105
• Teachers and principals in schools where almost a quarter of students have limited English proficiency are generally less experienced and more likely than staff in other schools to have provisional, emergency, or temporary certification or to lack certification.106

Policing and Violence in Schools
• While students of color are 45 percent of Illinois students, they account for 65 percent of suspensions and 64 percent of expulsions.107
• Black and Latino students are more likely than white or Asian students to feel unsafe at school.108 Black adolescents are particularly likely to fall prey to crime and violent death.109
• In the 2008-2009 school year, 39 Chicago Public School students were killed, up from 27 in the previous year.110

Educational Attainment, Employment, and Earnings
• In 2006, over 83 percent of white Illinois high school students graduated in four years, compared to 51 percent of Black and Latino students and only 30 percent of American Indian students.111
• Blacks (10.9 percent) and Latinos (38.6 percent) were, respectively, nearly twice and over six times as likely as whites (6.0 percent) to have less than a high school education.112 About 31 percent of immigrants over 25 years old, whether documented or not, have not completed high school, compared to 8.4 percent of U.S. citizens.113
• About one in five (21 percent) of Blacks and one in ten (11 percent) of Latinos, compared to over one third (35.5 percent) of whites, had a bachelor’s degree or higher.114 Only 14.6 percent of Blacks and 15.5 percent of Latinos with college degrees earn over $150,000 per year, compared to 27.4 percent of whites.115

EDUCATION IS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. A quality education is crucial to empowering individuals to develop their full human potential and participate in and contribute to their communities and a democratic society. Illinois’ investment in public education has not been adequate or equitable. Illinois ranks last in percent of state revenue spent on education.100 Students in the state’s wealthiest districts receive up to $19,000 more per year per pupil than the state’s poorest students.101 All people, youth and adults, have the right to a quality education.

A broad range of policies, procedures, and practices is needed to promote educational opportunities for all. Illinois’ education system must meet the needs of the people. School funding should be equitable. Teaching, curricula, and other educational programs should be accessible and culturally and linguistically appropriate for all communities. Educational standards and expectations—and the opportunities to fulfill these—should be the same for all students. Educational opportunities should not be denied to anyone because of immigration status, past criminal history, or any other reason. Quality education is a fundamental right.
State Bills With Positive Impacts

**Equitable School Funding: HB 174 (Miller/Cullerton)**
Illinois maintains one of the most inequitably funded state public school systems in the country. The wealthiest school districts spend up to $19,000 more per pupil than the poorest school districts. On average, each Black child is shortchanged $1,153 each year compared to a white child. HB 174 would amend Illinois tax and budget laws to increase revenue and distribute funds to school districts more equitably through the Common School Fund, instead of the Local Government Distributive Fund. This bill would increase the income tax rate for individuals, trusts, and estates from 3 percent—and corporations from 4.8 percent—to 5 percent, and increase certain sales taxes. The bill would increase the state's education foundation level and create new education funds to address existing education inequities.

HB 174: Rule 19(b) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

**Extend Preschool For All: SB 2594 (Lightford)**
Preschool should be accessible and affordable for all children. Studies have shown that children who participate in high-quality preschool programs are 44 percent more likely to complete high school, 23 percent more likely to be employed and 46 percent less likely to be incarcerated. In 2006, Illinois passed the Preschool for All program providing important early learning opportunities for Illinois' children. SB 2594 would remove the sunset language from this program to ensure 20,000 young children do not loose access to existing programs and to expand high-quality preschool programs for all 3-and 4-year-olds in the state.

SB2594: Referred to Assignments

**State Policy Ideas With Positive Impacts**

**Local School Council Capacity**
Chicago’s Local School Councils (LSCs) are site-based elected management teams of community members, parents, teachers, students, and others. They make important budgetary, educational, and administrative leadership decisions related to their local schools and play a vital role in school improvement. LSCs represent the vast majority of elected officials of color in Illinois—and are among the only offices to which undocumented immigrants can be elected. LSCs make schools more accessible and accountable and empower the voices of parents, students, and communities of color. Legislation is needed to increase the capacity of Chicago's Local School Councils.

**Social Supports and Parental Engagement in Schools**
Parents are a vital asset for schools and communities. They are invested in the quality of their children’s education and must be engaged in developing solutions in schools. The community school model, which creates educational opportunities for students and families, builds community support for schools, and creates community networks around schools, should be enhanced and expanded. Legislation is needed to promote and ensure that parents are informed about local school issues and empowered as partners in school decision making and planning.

**Making Capital Funds More Accessible and Equitable**
Illinois schools are overcrowded—especially in communities of color. Illinois’ recent capital bill committed $45 million to early childhood facility development. Unfortunately, the program requires entities to match the amount of funds they would receive dollar for dollar—which most community organizations cannot do. The Space Capacity Committee of the Illinois Early Learning Council has recommended a lower match of 10 percent, based on the past practices and real capacity of organizations. Legislation is needed to lower the required match for the early childhood capital program to 10 percent.

Illinois and International Education Equity Standards

- “A fundamental goal of the People of the State is the educational development of all persons to the limits of their capacities. The State shall provide for an efficient system of high quality public educational institutions and services. Education in public schools through the secondary level shall be free. There may be such other free education as the General Assembly provides by law. The State has the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education.” (Illinois State Constitution. Article X: Education. Section 1: Goal-Free Schools.)
- “The education of the child shall be directed to: (a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential; (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; (c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own; (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.” (Convention on the Rights of the Child art. 29, Sept. 2, 1990.)
- “Every person - child, youth and adult - shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs… required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning…” (The World Declaration on Education for All, March 9, 1990.)

United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations | 15
“I’ve been a Local School Council (LSC) member for 18 years. I started by attending a LSC workshop with a thousand people in an auditorium. The workshop was chaotic and confusing—I walked out knowing less than when I walked in. If someone like me who has a college degree, and has been a teacher, a daycare director and a school counselor doesn’t understand what they’re teaching—most people probably don’t either.

Four years ago, I went to a workshop run by the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO). I learned more that day than I had in 12 years from the School Board. I realized that LSC’s aren’t set up to work. I’m fighting to empower and build the capacity of LSCs. They provide parents positive ways to engage with schools, not just react to problems. By developing parents as leaders and establishing accountability to communities, LSCs help us ensure our schools are serving our children.” –Caneal Rule

**Federal Bills With Positive Impacts**

**Ex-Offender Access to Higher Education: HR.3295 (Frank-MA)**

Ex-offenders face many educational barriers before and after prison. About 70 percent of offenders and ex-offenders are high school dropouts—about half are “functionally illiterate.” They face additional challenges, including ineligibility for many local, state, and federal financial aid and other support programs. Nearly two of every three Illinoisans with past criminal convictions are people of color. HR.3294 would create the Removing Impediments to Student Education (RISE) Act of 2009, making persons convicted of drug offenses eligible for federal student financial assistance and requiring higher education institutions to notify students that they are now eligible for assistance.

HR.3295 Referred to House Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness on October 22, 2009

**School Vouchers: SB 2494 (Meeks)**

SB2494 would create the Illinois School Choice Program, a voucher program for students to enroll in non-public schools. Public education problems require public education solutions to ensure a quality education for Illinois’ over 2 million public school students—47 percent of whom are students of color. Voucher programs encourage students to enroll in private schools but do nothing to address the issues the majority of students face in public schools. The Bush Administration and the Wall Street Journal have praised the Milwaukee Parent Choice Program as a successful model, but the over 120, mostly small, Milwaukee schools that taxpayers support with tuition vouchers are performing at or below the levels achieved by comparable students attending Milwaukee Public Schools.

SB 2494: Referred to Assignments
Cutting programs important to families and communities is not the solution—cuts can prolong the recession and drive Illinois’ working families further into poverty. Illinois must increase revenue to pay for programs and services to ensure the human rights and overall well-being of Illinois families.

To increase revenue, Illinois must increase taxes to balance the budget and meet the needs of all Illinoisans. Our state taxes are not high—Illinois ranks 41st in the nation in state and local tax burden as a percentage of income. The problem is that Illinois has one of the most regressive tax systems in the country. The state’s poorer families pay a higher portion of their income in taxes than wealthier families do. The bottom 20 percent of income earners pay 13.1 percent of their income to the state in taxes, while the wealthiest one percent pay only 4.6 percent of their income. Illinois needs more progressive tax policies to ensure fairness—people who have more income or wealth should pay a higher proportion of their income in taxes.

A broad range of tax policies are needed to ensure that revenue and spending are both adequate and more equitable.
Raise the Illinois Income Tax
Illinois should raise the state’s income tax; doing so is the state’s most powerful way to raise the greatest amount of revenue. In FY 2008, the individual income tax generated $10.3 billion—over one-third of total General Funds revenue. Illinois has the lowest flat income tax rate in the country; the tax has not been raised in 20 years.

Increase the Earned Income Tax Credit
Illinois should raise the state’s earned income tax credit (EITC). Illinois has one of the lowest EITC levels in the country, at 5 percent of the federal EITC, with a maximum annual household credit of $241 compared to $1,447 in New York. In 2006, the EITC provided an average credit of $220 to 765,000 working Illinois families. Forty-two percent of households of color are eligible for the EITC.

Establish an Illinois Child Tax Credit
Illinois should establish a state version of the federal child tax credit, which allows families to claim a credit of up to $1,000 per qualifying child under the age of 17. By giving tax relief directly to families with children, a child tax credit would help reduce child poverty and strengthen the future of our state.

Expand the Base of the State Sales Tax
Illinois should increase revenue by updating its sales tax system to include a broader range of services. Sales taxes are regressive because affluent households pay a smaller portion of their income in sales taxes than poorer households do. Broadening the sales tax base to cover selected non-essential services would be less regressive than increasing the sales tax.

Increase Standard Exemption
Illinois should increase the state’s standard exemption, which gives the same amount of tax relief per person to all households. Established in 1969, Illinois’ personal exemption amount was set at $1,000—the equivalent of more than $5,000 today. In the last 40 years, this exemption has only been raised once, to $2,000. Increasing the personal exemption would provide some tax relief for all Illinoisans. A substantially larger exemption would also make the overall tax structure somewhat more progressive.

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**TAX FAIRNESS FUNDAMENTALS**

**Fair:** Ensures lower-income families do not pay more in taxes than wealthy families (as percent of income).

**Responsive:** Generates revenue from areas of the economy that are growing and decreases dependency on areas that are declining.

**Stable:** Provides reliable and secure sources of revenue for the state, even during bad economic times.

**Simple and Transparent:** Allows residents to understand the tax system and make intelligent decisions, increasing taxpayer confidence in their government.
HEALTH EQUITY

HEALTH EQUITY IS A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. All people have the right to health care and the right to live in a healthy environment. Nationally, about one in three immigrants and their children lack health insurance, compared to 13 percent of people born in the U.S. The percentage of uninsured Illinoisans grew from 10.9 in 1990 to 13 percent in 2007-8. Of Illinois’ 1,652,383 uninsured, Blacks and Latinos made up 18 percent (345,678) and 25 percent (439,393), respectively. Racial health disparities—from higher rates of obesity and diabetes to HIV and cancer deaths—persist in Illinois. Cultural and linguistic factors also limit the access that families of color and immigrant families have to health care.

A broad range of policies are needed to increase access to quality health care for all. Investment in health resources in communities—from school-based health centers to community clinics—will increase access to health care for low-income families. Families of color and immigrant families need services that meet their language and cultural needs. Policies that exclude individuals or families from accessing health care violate the rights of all people.

Racial Disparities Related to Health Equity

Health Insurance Coverage
• Nearly 1.7 million Illinoisans are uninsured—18.2 percent of Blacks, 25.3 percent of Latinos, 12.7 percent of Asians and 36.8 percent of American Indians are uninsured, compared to 9.5 percent of whites. Immigrant children are four times as likely as U.S.-born children to be uninsured.
• Employer-based health coverage has declined from 69.9 percent in the 1980s to 55.1 percent nationally in the mid 2000s—and from 75.4 percent to 58.6 percent for Illinois workers. In 2007-8, 49.7 percent of Blacks, 51.6 percent of Latinos, 70.3 percent of Asians, and 49.1 percent of American Indians had employment-based health insurance, compared to 69.2 percent of whites.
• Public insurance programs are important to all Illinoisans—35.5 percent of Blacks, 25.1 percent of Latinos, 14.3 percent of Asians, 15.1 percent of American Indians and 24.1 percent of whites rely on government-sponsored health care.

Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities
• Eleven percent of Asian Americans and 11 percent of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander adults rated their health as fair or poor compared to 23 percent of American Indians and Alaskan Natives, 22 percent of African Americans, 18 percent of Hispanics, and 13 percent of non-Hispanic Whites.
• Access to primary preventative healthcare substantially improves health outcomes. Half of Latinos and more than a quarter of Blacks do not have a regular doctor, compared to one fifth of whites.
• In Illinois, racial and ethnic health disparities have chronic and catastrophic consequences for communities of color. American Indians have a diabetes rate three times that of whites. Asians suffer from a liver cancer rate more than three times that of whites. Latinos have twice the diabetes rate of whites. Blacks have triple the infant mortality rate of whites and accounted for 56 percent of all new HIV cases between 1999 and 2003.

Language and Cultural Barriers
• Cultural and language factors contribute to racial disparities in medical treatment. Some research shows that language issues are as significant as the lack of insurance in using health services.
• Non-English speaking patients have been found less likely to use primary and preventive care services and more likely to use emergency rooms.
• Over one quarter of Limited English Proficient patients who needed, but did not get, an interpreter reported not understanding their medication instructions, compared with only two percent of those who either needed and received an interpreter or did not need one.

SUMMARY OF HEALTH EQUITY BILLS

State Bills with Positive Impacts
• Equitable Access to Healthy Food: SJR 72 [Collins]
• Community Health Center Expansion: SB 150 [Clayborne/Feigenholtz]

State Policy Ideas with Positive Impacts
• Building Healthy Communities
• Medicaid Coverage for Translation and Interpretation Services
• Removing Language and Cultural Barriers
• Expanding School-Based Health Centers

Federal Bills with Positive Impacts
• Access to Affordable Health Care: H.R. 3962 (Dingell-MI)/H.R.3590 (Rangel-NY)
Equitable Access to Healthy Food: SJR 72 (Collins)
Lack of access to healthy food leads to a myriad of health problems. Nearly one-third of Illinois’ census tracts lack access to healthy food, with only 70.8 percent of Illinois census tracts having healthy food retailers within a half-mile of their boundaries. SJR 72 would recommend the creation of an Illinois Fresh Food Fund and support multi-sector partners to “come together to erase the disparity in nutrition between low income and high income neighborhoods.” Additional legislation is needed to establish grant and loan programs, increase public and private investment in local grocery store development projects in underserved communities, and address the broader social, racial, and economic issues related to the lack of access to healthy food in communities of color.

Community Health Center Expansion: SB 150 (Clayborne/Feigenholtz)
Community health centers provide affordable care that is responsive and customized to the low-income, racial, and ethnic communities they serve. Nationally, nearly two-thirds of health center patients are people of color—23 percent Black, 36 percent Latino, 3.5 percent Asian, and 1.1 percent American Indian. SB 150, the Community Health Center Construction Act, would establish a capital grants program to fund new and existing community health centers that meet the needs of medically underserved populations and areas.

Building Healthy Communities
The absence of grocery stores and the prevalence of liquor stores have produced unhealthy and unsafe environments in many low-income communities and communities of color. More than half a million Chicagoans live in three predominantly Black areas of the city identified as “Underserved Areas” with very limited or no access to the fresh healthy food available at grocery stores—these populations have experienced large increases in cancer and diabetes. The density of liquor stores in these communities contribute to high rates of alcoholism among adults and youth. Legislation is needed to create community-led bodies that would review liquor store licensing and business practices in communities—especially around schools—to ensure accountability and build better relations between local businesses and residents.

Medicaid Coverage for Translation and Interpretation Services
One in ten Illinoisans struggle with speaking English and more than three quarters of English Language Learners are people of color. Forty-four percent of Latino children have Medicaid coverage. Language barriers in the health care setting can lead to significant problems, such as delay or denial of services, challenges in medication management, and in some cases, misdiagnosis of symptoms, which exacerbate existing health disparities. However, Illinois’ Medicaid program does not cover interpretation and translation services. Legislation is needed to expand Medicaid coverage in Illinois to include these essential services.
**Removing Language and Cultural Barriers**

Language barriers reduce the overall quality of health care.\(^{170}\) For example, patients receiving language assistance report better understanding of how to take prescription medications.\(^{171}\) Twenty-seven percent of patients who needed an interpreter but did not receive one said they did not understand their medication instructions.\(^{172}\) SB 544 would strengthen the requirements for language assistance offered by health care providers, to ensure that proper health care information reaches all patients and their communities. This would ensure higher quality health care for the 665,000 Latino and 111,000 Asian Illinoisans who struggle speaking English.\(^{173}\)

**Expanding School-Based Health Centers**

School-based health centers are important to the health and education of students. In 2003-4, an estimated 33 and 50 percent respectively of uninsured Black and Latino children had no usual source of health care, compared to 19 percent of uninsured white children.\(^{174}\) Preventable health care problems are among the leading causes of absenteeism for Illinois students.\(^{175}\) Low-income students and children of color—many of whom are uninsured—rely on school-based health centers for health care. Legislation is needed to expand and enhance these centers capacity to provide important health services to Illinois students.\(^{176}\) Nationally, 22 percent, 14 percent and 11 percent of Latino, Black and Asian children, respectively, are uninsured, compared to 7 percent of white children.\(^{177}\)

**Federal Policies With Positive Impacts**

**Access to Affordable Health Care: H.R. 3962 (Dingell-MI)/H.R.3590 (Rangel-NY)**

Access to affordable quality health care is important for all people. In 2008, there were 46.3 million uninsured people in the U.S.\(^{178}\) Nationally, 19.1 percent of Blacks, 30.7 percent of Latinos, 17.6 percent of Asians, 31.7 percent of American Indian and Alaskan Natives, and 18.5 percent of Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders—compared to 10.8 percent of whites.\(^{179}\) Over 33 percent of foreign-born people were uninsured compared to 12.9 percent of U.S. born.\(^{180}\) In 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate passed separate health care bills. Both houses should negotiate and pass a final bill to increase access to affordable health care.

H.R.3962: Read the second time. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders.

H.R.3590: Passed Senate with an amendment and an amendment to the Title.

“In September 2005, I got very sick. I went to the doctor in terrible pain. My doctor didn’t speak Spanish. I asked for an interpreter repeatedly, but no one came. The doctor said he understood me. He ran some tests, gave me some pills and sent me home. I didn’t want to go back, but the pain kept getting worse. I went back two more times—the same thing happened. I didn’t understand how a private hospital in a Latino neighborhood had no interpreters. On New Year’s Eve, the pain was so bad I went to another hospital. They didn’t have interpreters either, but my 5 year old daughter interpreted for me—and they listened. My appendix, liver, kidney and gallbladder were infected. I had emergency surgery to remove my appendix. They said if I waited any longer, I would have died. My human rights were violated. They ignored my requests for an interpreter and denied my right to care—I almost died because I don’t speak English. Being able to communicate with your doctor is so important. Latinos, all people of all races and languages, we all have the same needs and there should be interpreters for all people to ensure quality health care for everyone.” –Leticia Gonzalez
Housing Equity

Housing Equity is a Human Rights Issue. One in three Americans is “housing cost burdened,” spending at least 30 percent of their income on housing.184 Nationally, 2.5–3.5 million people are homeless every year. In 2006, 73,656 Chicagoans were homeless—75 percent were Black and six percent were Latino.185 From the recent foreclosure crisis and the demolition of public housing to gentrification and the ongoing lack of affordable rental housing, access to affordable housing has been worsened by higher rates of unemployment and declining wages. Too many Illinois families have been displaced from their homes and their communities.

A broad range of policy changes are needed to increase access to affordable housing and ensure the rights of renters and homeowners. We should stem the tide of the foreclosure crisis in a way that allows people to remain in their homes and minimizes the negative impact of vacant properties on communities. Existing good quality affordable housing—including public housing and subsidized and project-based Section 8 units—must be preserved. Federal and state policy should encourage the development of rental and for-sale properties, especially those that are affordable for low-income families. Affordability standards for both individuals and families should be realistic for working Illinoisans. Policies that deny individuals and families the right to access public and private affordable housing—based on race, source or amount of income, family size, criminal record, or immigration status—must end.

Racial Disparities Related to Housing Equity

Housing Problems and Homelessness
- One in seven Americans is extremely housing cost burdened, spending at least 50 percent of their income on housing.186
- In no jurisdiction in this country can a full-time worker who earns the prevailing minimum wage afford to rent a two-bedroom apartment at fair market value.187
- Chicago ranks 5th in the nation for segregation of poor families.188 While 53 percent of the nation’s homeless are people of color, this is true for 84 percent of Chicago’s homeless.189

Losing Affordable Options at All Levels
- Low-income families and seniors cannot afford housing. In most areas of Illinois, the average rent exceeds the entire maximum Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grant; less than half of families receiving TANF grants receive any rental subsidies.190
- By 2020, Cook County’s supply of low-cost rental housing is expected to drop by 78,000 units192—almost one-fourth of these losses are in Black communities193—while about 40,000 affordable rentals are projected to be constructed over the same period. Thus, for every newly built unit, nearly two are likely to be lost.194
- In 2007, for every family living in one of Illinois’ 63,810 public housing units, two other families need public housing.195
- About 13 percent (133,000) of Chicago households can afford only $250 a month for housing.196 About 37,000 apartments are available for rent at this price.197 This means that the city is short by nearly 100,000 units that are affordable to poor households.198

Foreclosure Filings
- Illinois ranks fourth in the nation in the number of foreclosures.199 Over 4.2 million homes in the state are experiencing foreclosure-related decline.200 Between 2009 and 2012, Illinois will lose $126 billion in home equity wealth due to foreclosures.201
- Cook County has experienced a 338 percent increase in foreclosures over the last decade—and expects to have over 92,000 pending foreclosure cases by the end of 2010.202 Between 2006 and 2008, DuPage, Kane, McHenry, and Cook counties experienced 137, 114, 106, and 101 percent increases, respectively.203
- Foreclosure cases where the borrower and the lender cannot agree on a loan modification or short sale typically end in a foreclosure auction. Between 2006 and 2008, foreclosure auction cases increased from 2,905 to 9,947 in Chicago—a 242.4 percent increase.204
- Nationally, renters make up about 40 percent of the families facing the loss of their housing due to foreclosure.205

Summary of Housing Equity Bills

State Policy Ideas with Positive Impacts
- Foreclosure Mediation, Education, and Prevention
- Adjust Affordability Standards
- Promote Access to Federal Housing Supports
- Discrimination Protections for Seniors
- Source of Income Protections
- National Housing Trust Fund Allocation

Federal Bills with Positive Impacts
- Community Reinvestment Modernization: HR.1479 (Johnson, TX)
State Policy Ideas With Positive Impacts

Foreclosure Mediation, Education, and Prevention
In 2009, the 131,132 foreclosure filings in Illinois affected 2.5 percent of housing units in the state. Of the eight zones in the Chicago area with the highest foreclosure rates, seven are overwhelmingly Black. Foreclosures and the vacant property problems they often cause are devastating for facilities and communities. Legislation is needed to authorize local governments to enact vacant property ordinances to hold financial institutions accountable for securing vacant properties and establish a $1,000 fee for each foreclosure sale to be used to support foreclosure prevention activities, such as borrower outreach, housing counseling, and court-based mediation. Court-sponsored mediation programs with lenders and borrowers have proven 60 percent effective in helping participants avoid foreclosure.

Adjust Affordability Standards
People of color disproportionally rely on affordable housing programs, yet many of these programs use affordability standards that are too high for working families, violating their right to housing. Public for-sale and rental housing affordability standards are as high as 120 and 80 percent of the area median income (AMI), respectively. Statewide, this would be $83,280 and $55,500 respectively for a family of four. The National Affordable Housing Trust Fund targets 75 percent of its funding for households with incomes at or below 30 percent of the AMI — statewide this would be $20,800 for a family of four. In 2008, median earnings were $25,842 for Black workers, 23,340 for Latino workers, $29,331 for American Indian workers, and 38,802 for Asian workers, compared to $34,429 for white workers. Legislation is needed to ensure Illinois’ for-sale and rental housing programs target families that fall below 30 percent of the AMI to meet the needs of lower-income families who need affordable housing.

Promote Access to Federal Housing Supports
The federal Home Affordable Modification Program (HAMP) enables borrowers with loans owned or guaranteed by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac or other participating servicers to refinance their mortgages into more affordable monthly payments. Legislation is needed to increase participation in this program that helps families avoid foreclosure and keep their homes. Legislation could require foreclosure complaints to include information on whether the loan is HAMP eligible or whether use of HAMP has been attempted. Only 9 percent of loans eligible under HAMP have been modified.

International Housing Equity Standards

• “The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right…” (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, IESCR Art. 11, Dec. 16, 1966.)

• “The right to housing should not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with, for example, the shelter provided by merely having a roof over one’s head or views shelter exclusively as a commodity. Rather it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity … The right to housing is integrally linked to other human rights … most importantly that the right to housing should be ensured to all persons irrespective of income or access to economic resources … all at a reasonable cost …” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment 4, Dec. 12, 1991, UN Doc. E/1992/23.)

• “[All people have a human right against] arbitrary or unlawful interference with one’s home. … Evictions should not result in individuals being rendered homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights. Where those affected are unable to provide for themselves, the State party must take all appropriate measures, to the maximum of its available resources, to ensure that adequate alternative housing, resettlement or access to productive land, as the case may be, is available.” (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment 7, May 20, 1998, UN Doc. E/1998/22.)
Illinois ranks fourth in the nation in the number of foreclosures. Over 4.2 million homes in the state are experiencing foreclosure-related decline.

**Discrimination Protections for Seniors**

Of the states with at least three nursing homes where blacks are the majority of residents, Illinois has the highest number and the highest percentage of poorly rated black-majority nursing homes.212 The Illinois Assisted Living and Shared Housing Act (IAL/SHA) does not protect seniors from discrimination or denial of needed services and housing because of race or disability. This Act should be amended to extend the anti-discrimination provisions of the federal Fair Housing Act and the Illinois Human Rights Act to cover the facilities regulated by IAL/SHA.

**Source of Income Protections**

Many Illinois residents rely on vouchers and other public housing assistance programs. In 2008, of the nearly 97,000 participants in the Chicago Housing Authority’s Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program, some 90 percent were people of color.213 While Chicago, Urbana, and Naperville have passed ordinances prohibiting landlords from discriminating against potential tenants based on their source of income, the state has not. Legislation is needed to provide these same protections to ensure equal access to services and freedom from discrimination for all Illinois residents.

**National Housing Trust Fund Allocation**

Affordable housing is important to ensuring the right to housing for all people. Increased public and private investment and involvement in developing affordable housing is necessary to meet the housing needs of low-income families. Of the 75 Illinois public housing authorities that offer housing choice vouchers (HCV), 42 have closed their waiting lists.214 In Chicago alone, 40,000 people are on HCV waiting lists—95 percent of those on the lists are people of color.215 The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Jobs for Main Street Act, directing $2 billion to the National Housing Trust Fund to support the housing needs of lower-income residents, including through project-based vouchers, as well as $1 billion in capital funds for public housing. The U.S. Senate should follow the House and pass the Act to help meet the affordable housing needs of low-income families across the country, and in Illinois.

**Federal Bills With Positive Impacts**

**Community Reinvestment Modernization: HR.1479 (Johnson, TX)**

The Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) of 1977 greatly increased access to credit for communities of color and low- to moderate-income communities. Between 1993 and 2002, home mortgage lending increased by 80 percent to Blacks and by 186 percent to Latinos. Unfortunately, inequities in access to sound credit and financial products remain, particularly from institutions not regulated by CRA. Currently under CRA, each federally insured depository institution is evaluated periodically on its record in helping to meet the credit needs of the communities in which it operates, including low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. HR.1479, the Community Reinvestment Modernization Act of 2009, would apply CRA to a variety of non-bank institutions, including independent mortgage companies, credit unions, mortgage company affiliates of banks, insurance companies, and securities firms. The CRA Modernization Act would also increase the accountability of covered institutions through improved data disclosure and additional opportunities for public comment on an institution’s performance in meeting the needs of their assessment areas, including serving communities of color and low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

HR.1479: Referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.
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“In 2004, we bought our first home. It was scary, but rewarding. I learned to be handy—we put a lot of love into our house. In 2006, I lost my job of 7 years. I’ve been working different jobs and my wife is working, but it’s been hard to make ends meet. Along with bills, our monthly payments kept going up—they’ve gone up from $1,200 to $1,600 a month. Going into foreclosure has been an emotional roller coaster. We’re trying to work with the bank to modify our loan. It’s been a long process. We’ve been sending in form after form and waiting. It’s horrible. There are over 500 families facing foreclosure just in our zip code. As the head of the family, it’s stressful. You hold on to your family and brace yourself. We’re lucky that we can move in with family if we have to, but with a wife and 7 kids it’d be hard. We really hope we can stay in our home.” – Rob and Aimee Navarro
IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

IMMIGRANT RIGHTS ARE A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. From employment discrimination and exploitation to language barriers and lack of access to quality education and health services, the rights of immigrants, with and without U.S. citizenship status, are violated every day. Between 1990 and 2008, the number of immigrants in this country nearly doubled, from approximately 20 million to 38 million. This is especially important to Illinois, home to the nation’s fifth largest immigrant population. One in four children in Illinois is the child of an immigrant. Immigration is also an important racial justice issue. One in three people of color in Illinois is an immigrant, and four out of five Illinois immigrants are people of color. Respecting and protecting the rights of immigrants and their children are important to ensuring a happy and healthy future for the state and the nation.

A broad range of policy changes that offer pathways to citizenship and protect immigrants from intimidation and exploitation are needed to ensure the human rights of all people. Full and fair access to education and employment opportunities and removing language and cultural barriers to services are critical to serving diverse immigrant communities. Policies that exclude immigrants, of any legal status, from accessing a quality education, health care, or employment are a violation of human rights.

### SUMMARY OF IMMIGRATION EQUITY BILLS

#### State Policy Ideas with Positive Impacts
- Increase Investment in Bilingual Education
- Expanding Language Access Programs

#### Federal Bills with Positive Impacts
- Comprehensive Immigration Reform: HR.4321 [Ortiz-TX]
- Opportunities for Immigrant Students: HR.1751 [Berman-CA]/S.729 [Durbin-IL]

#### State Bills with Negative Impacts
- Immigrant Exclusion: HB 4142 [Ramey Jr.]
- Deputizing for Deportation: HB 1147 [Ramey Jr.]

#### Federal Bills with Negative Impacts
- E-verify: HR.662 [Giffords-AZ]
- Extending the USA PATRIOT Act: S.1692 [Leahy-VT]

### Racial Disparities Related to Immigrant Rights

#### Immigrants and Their Children
- There are 1,782,423 immigrants in Illinois, of whom 990,000 are not U.S. citizens. The Department of Homeland Security estimates that 550,000 Illinoisans were undocumented in 2006.
- Nationally, 16.4 million children with immigrant parents making up one in five children in this country. Fifty-six percent of children of immigrant parents were Latino, 18 percent were Asian, 18 percent were white and eight percent were Blacks (primarily African and Caribbean).
- While 87 percent of children of immigrant parents are citizens, nearly one in three (5 million) have at least one undocumented parent.

#### Economic and Educational Challenges for Immigrant Families
- In 2006, 22 percent of children of immigrants in the U.S. were poor and 51 percent were low-income, compared to 16 percent and 35 percent respectively of those with U.S. born parents.
- In 2006, 26 percent of children of immigrants across the country were in families where neither parent had completed high school or its equivalent, compared to only eight percent with U.S. born parents.
- Nearly 30 percent of the nation’s 22 million immigrant workers are high-school drop-outs, but about one-fourth are college graduates.

#### Intimidating Workers and Separating Families
- Between 2005 and 2007, the number of immigrants arrested in work site raids increased from hundreds to 4,000.
- For every two immigrants detained, a child is separated from his or her family.
- Two-thirds of children of deported immigrant parents are under the age of 10.
Increase Investment in Bilingual Education
Bilingual education programs are crucial for immigrant children—and their parents. In 2006, children of immigrants accounted for over 20 percent of children in preschool through high school in the U.S.\textsuperscript{235} Six of seven elementary school students whose English proficiency is limited live in households where no one over the age of 14 is proficient in English.\textsuperscript{236} Legislation is needed to invest in bilingual education programs in schools and communities.

Expanding Language Access Programs
In 2008, nearly 30 percent of Illinois school districts reported a shortage of teachers for bilingual education programs.\textsuperscript{237} One or both parents of 61 percent of children of immigrants have limited proficiency in English—82 percent of Mexican parents, 72 percent of South Asian parents, and 26 percent of European parents.\textsuperscript{238} Legislation is needed to increase investment and expand language access and education programs to address the needs of Illinois’ 1,175,509 people who speak English less than “very well.”\textsuperscript{239}

Federal Bills With Positive Impacts

**Comprehensive Immigration Reform: HR.4321 (Ortiz-TX)**
Immigration reform must be fair and humane and must ensure that the rights of this country’s nearly 38 million immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers\textsuperscript{240} are protected. Reform must respect immigrants’ social, cultural, and economic contributions to this country’s history, present, and future. HR. 4321 would create the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America’s Security and Prosperity Act of 2009 by expanding opportunities, including access to visas and other programs that provide pathways to citizenship. Fair and humane immigration reform would not require immigrants already in the U.S. to return home for any period, and would eliminate the existing backlog and reduce waiting times for family members and others who wish to come to this country.

HR. 4321: Referred to the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities.

**Opportunities for Immigrant Students: HR.1751 (Berman-CA)/S.729 (Durbin-IL)**
Undocumented students face barriers to higher education. In Illinois, 360,000 undocumented immigrants have high school diplomas\textsuperscript{241} —and 65,000 undocumented students graduate from high school every year.\textsuperscript{242} HR.1751 and S.729 would create the Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, offering conditional permanent residency and a pathway to citizenship (after six years) for eligible undocumented youth who complete two years at a U.S. college or university or in the military.

HR. 1751: Referred to the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness.
S. 729: Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Illinois and International Immigration Rights Standards

- “Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.” (Universal Declaration on Human Rights art. 15, Dec. 10, 1948.)
- “Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.” (Universal Declaration on Human Rights art.14, Dec. 10, 1948.)
- “The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State. (Universal Declaration on Human Rights art. 16, Dec. 10, 1948.)
- “The migratory status of a person cannot constitute a justification to deprive him of the enjoyment and exercise of human rights, including those of a labor-related nature … Undocumented migrant workers possess the same labor rights as other workers in the State where they are employed.” (Inter-American Court of Human Rights Advisory Opinion OC-18/03, Sept. 17, 2003.)
**Immigrant Exclusion: HB 4142 (Ramey Jr.)**

HB 4142 would create the Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act, requiring state and local agencies to verify the immigration status of anyone charged with a felony or driving under the influence as well as of new employees and those applying for public benefits; prohibit the Secretary of State and educational institutions from issuing identification cards for immigrants who are not legal permanent residents (with some exceptions); reverse the Illinois DREAM Act, which allowed undocumented students to take advantage of in-state tuition rates; make transporting undocumented immigrants a Class 4 felony, and make discharging a U.S. citizen or permanent resident alien worker while retaining an undocumented immigrant worker a civil rights violation. Immigrants are crucial contributors to our current and future social, economic, and political strength and stability. The human rights of Illinois’ 800,000 immigrants must be protected.

HB 4142: Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

**Deputizing for Deportation: HB 1147 (Ramey Jr.)**

HB 1147 would amend the Unified Code of Corrections, creating a partnership between the Illinois Department of Corrections and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Through this partnership, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and state and local entities would cooperate in the Rapid Removal of Eligible Parolees Accepted for Transfer (Rapid REPAT) program, which allows for early conditional release to deport undocumented immigrants in state custody to their home countries. This bill would deny immigrants their human rights and increase deportations that divide families and destabilize communities. The state should follow the lead of cities like Chicago that have passed legislation to prohibit cooperation between local and federal police for the purpose of enforcing immigration policy.

HB 1147: Rule 19(a) / Re-referred to Rules Committee

“I’m Puerto Rican and Mexican. I see how much my Mexican family has struggled. My grandparents came here legally when my father was one month old. They became citizens, but my father couldn’t. Until I was ten, he was in and out of jail for different non-violent crimes. In 2003, he tried to turn his life around filing for citizenship, but was denied as a felon. He was deported, and left at the border. He came back and was doing well—working for 2 years at a shipping company in Houston. Then he got in a car accident that wasn’t his fault. He was put in jail and detained for 7 months. He was moved around in the middle of the night—we wouldn’t know where or how he was. Last December he was deported. He can’t find a job because he barely speaks Spanish, and he’s totally alone. We’ve all suffered. It’s totally unfair.” –Hazel Gomez
The more than 38 million immigrants in America249 are 15 percent of the United States labor force.250 The Social Security Administration has estimated that undocumented immigrants contribute approximately $8.5 billion in social security and Medicare funds each year.251

Immigrants work and live throughout Illinois, contributing to the state’s economic and social growth, including $5.35 billion per year to Chicago’s economy alone.252

About three-quarters of undocumented immigrants pay payroll taxes.253 Because they do not have correct social security numbers, their contributions are put into an “early suspense file.” In 2002, nine million W-2s, accounting for $56 billion in earnings or about 1.5 percent of total reported wages, went into this file.254

Immigrants have contributed to the state’s economic and population growth—without which Illinois would have lost two Congressional seats rather than one.255

Growing up in the Philippines, my family always dreamed of coming to the U.S. We had to wait so long, 13 years, my brother Galo turned 21—we had to leave him behind. Life was hard in Chicago, but it was harder for Galo—we took away his family. He became an alcoholic, and developed liver cancer, Hepatitis B and Tuberculosis. We applied for an emergency visa so he could get medical treatment in the U.S. My parents were the only ones who could afford to go back to see him—tickets were $1500. The rest of us talked to him over the phone. We kept writing to the U.S. Embassy, time was running out. A few weeks later, my brother died. Two days later, we received the approval for his visa. I’m a citizen now, but this piece of paper cost me so much—my brother died because of this. Our system needs to change—splitting up families has to end.”—Maria Degillo
United States and Human Rights: Updates and Opportunities

“Democracy cannot be imposed on any nation from the outside. Each society must search for its own path, and no path is perfect. Each country will pursue a path rooted in the culture of its people, and—in the past—America has too often been selective in its promotion of democracy …

In short, the United Nations can be an institution that is disconnected from what matters in the lives of our citizens, or it can be indispensable in advancing the interests of the people we serve.

We have reached a pivotal moment. The United States stands ready to begin a new chapter of international cooperation—one that recognizes the rights and responsibilities of all nations. With confidence in our cause, and with a commitment to our values, we call on all nations to join us in building the future that our people deserve.”

—President Barack Obama, speech to the United Nations General Assembly, September 23, 2009

The United Nations (UN) was founded in 1945, after World War II, to bring the world’s nations and their people together to promote peace and cooperation in solving international economic, social, and humanitarian problems. The UN has adopted a wide range of declarations, covenants, and treaties that articulate a broad set of rights, including the right to housing, a quality education, food and shelter, due process under the law, freedom of religion and speech, and the right to be free from discrimination. This human rights vision was first laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which every member state of the United Nations, including the United States, has affirmed; the declaration has been translated into over 300 languages and dialects, making it the most widely translated document in the world.

While the United States is the world’s wealthiest and most powerful country, it has not been an international leader in standing for human rights, either in practice or in policy. As the nation’s communities of color and immigrant communities increase, racial gaps and social inequities continue to grow. We now have a President who believes in human rights. It is time for our government to take action to promote human rights, here at home and abroad.

The United States’ Opportunities to Adhere to and Advance Human Rights.

• The U.S. Department of State is considering ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. To participate in ratification efforts contact Joann Ward, JWard@law.columbia.edu.

• The Human Rights Council will review the United States’ human rights record in December of 2010. Reports that U.S. civil society groups submit to the Council before April 19, 2010 will be included in the review and assist the council in questioning the U.S.’ human rights record of the last five years. To get involved contact Joann Ward, JWard@law.columbia.edu.

• The Campaign for New Domestic Human Rights Agenda is engaging the Obama Administration on the question of creating an Inter-Agency Working Group on implementing human rights treaties, as well as supporting the transformation of the Civil Rights Commission into a Human Rights Commission. To become involved in the Campaign contact Joann Ward, JWard@law.columbia.edu.

THE ILLINOIS COMMISSION ON THE ELIMINATION OF POVERTY

The Illinois Commission on the Elimination of Poverty is an independent body charged with developing strategies to eliminate poverty and adhere to international human rights standards. Established in 2008 through statewide grassroots efforts led by the From Poverty to Opportunity Campaign of the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights, the commission constructs tangible mechanisms for ensuring that Illinois upholds and integrates human rights standards into its policy and budgetary plans and decisions.

This work includes:
• Creating and monitoring a specific, substantive, measurable strategic plan to cut extreme poverty in half by 2015.
• Advising and commenting on state matters that may positively or negatively affect the state’s goal of ending poverty.

For more information contact Doug Schenkelberg, DSchenkelberg@heartlandalliance.org.

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The United States’ Opportunities to Adhere to and Advance Human Rights.

• The U.S. Department of State is considering ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. To participate in ratification efforts contact Joann Ward, JWard@law.columbia.edu.

• The Human Rights Council will review the United States’ human rights record in December of 2010. Reports that U.S. civil society groups submit to the Council before April 19, 2010 will be included in the review and assist the council in questioning the U.S.’ human rights record of the last five years. To get involved contact Joann Ward, JWard@law.columbia.edu.

• The Campaign for New Domestic Human Rights Agenda is engaging the Obama Administration on the question of creating an Inter-Agency Working Group on implementing human rights treaties, as well as supporting the transformation of the Civil Rights Commission into a Human Rights Commission. To become involved in the Campaign contact Joann Ward, JWard@law.columbia.edu.
Human Rights Declarations, Covenants, and Conventions as of January 2010

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
This declaration is a founding human rights document which affirms that every human being, simply by virtue of being, has the full range of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. The declaration seeks to protect the inherent dignity, equality, and freedom of every person.

Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) ratified 1994
This treaty bans torture and other ill treatment under all circumstances and establishes the UN Committee against Torture. Governments must take all necessary steps to prevent torture, including making it illegal and training law enforcement and military on torture prevention.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) signed in 1980
This treaty prohibits all forms of discrimination against women by both government and private actors (including within the family). Discrimination includes not only intentional discrimination against women but also policies and practices that have a discriminatory impact, including issues such as equal pay for equal work, domestic violence, access to health care, parental leave, and discrimination linked to parenting responsibilities.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) signed in 2009
This treaty addresses the full spectrum of human rights for those with disabilities. It protects principles of individual dignity and autonomy, non-discrimination, full inclusion and participation in society, respect for difference, equality of opportunity, accessibility, equality between men and women, and respect for children with disabilities.

Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) signed in 1995
The Convention on the Rights of the Child promotes and protects the well-being of all children. It emphasizes four key themes: the rights of children to survival; to develop to their fullest potential; to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation; and to participate in family, cultural, and social life.

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) ratified in 1994
This treaty prohibits all forms of racial discrimination, including policies or practices that have a discriminatory impact. It commits governments to the elimination of racial discrimination in all arenas, including the economic and social sphere, and to the promotion of understanding among all races.

International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (MWC)
This treaty does not create new rights for migrants but aims at guaranteeing equality of treatment and the same working conditions for migrants and nationals. The Convention relies on the fundamental notion that all migrants should have access to a minimum degree of protection. The Convention recognizes that legal migrants may legitimately claim more rights than undocumented migrants, but it stresses that the fundamental human rights of undocumented migrants, like those of all human beings, must be respected. This treaty has not been signed or ratified.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) ratified in 1992
The treaty protects civil and political rights, including the right to be free from torture, slavery, arbitrary arrest, and detention. It also protects people's right to choose freely whom they will marry. It guarantees the rights of children and prohibits discrimination based on race, sex, color, national origin, or language. It restricts the death penalty, forbidding it entirely for people less under age 18.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) signed in 1979
The ICESCR protects a wide range of social, economic and cultural rights, including the right to health, a decent job, education, adequate food, housing, and social protection.

HUMAN RIGHTS GLOSSARY
A declaration is a statement by UN members that reflects or affirms their current positions or commitments to existing human rights standards or calls for greater protection of particular rights and peoples. Declarations can contribute to an emerging new human rights standard but do not by themselves create obligations. The UN General Assembly often adopts declarations through the votes of member country representatives.

Treaties, conventions, charters, and covenants (different names for the same thing) are multilateral (involving multiple countries) agreements among UN member states. More than statements, these documents create new human rights standards and resemble legislation, contracts, and constitutions. These are typically signed by the Head of State creating an obligation that the state will not defeat the “object of purpose” of the document, and is a signal that the State will ratify it. In the U.S., the Senate provides advice and consent, and the President ratifies the document at which time the document becomes part of federal law.

Reservations, understandings, and declarations (RUDs) are limitations that a UN member may impose when it ratifies a treaty, convention, charter or covenant. While ratification makes the document part of domestic law, RUDs can limit how the document is implemented or enforced. Among these limitations can be one rendering a document “not self-executing,” which means that while the member state is obligated under the treaty standards, the state’s legal system offer victims no cause of action to sue for violations.
The United Congress of Community and Religious Organizations’ nine member organizations include:

Albany Park Neighborhood Council (APNC) is a broad based community organization that unites 27 member institutions including religious institutions, ethnic associations, schools, and universities in Albany Park, Irving Park, North Park, and West Ridge. These areas encompass the most diverse communities in the city. As a result of their diversity and large immigrant populations, these four neighborhoods face a unique set of issues and problems. Through APNC, community residents and institutions have been able to identify the most pressing issues facing families, develop effective strategies to address those issues, and see tangible accomplishments as a result of their work. Community leaders have been at the forefront of tackling issues that put added pressure on families and communities. See www.apncorganizing.org

Ambassadors for Christ Church, established in the United States, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Jamaica, the Ambassadors for Christ (AFC) is a living church, where the members unite in commitment to grow in love, serve our God, and strengthen each other. Being a part of AFC is a moving experience that leads toward spiritual progress. It is at the AFC Church that members learn to love God, love others, share God, and serve the world in Christ’s stead.

Enlace Chicago is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of the residents of the Little Village Community by fostering a physically safe and healthy environment in which to live and by championing opportunities for educational advancement and economic development. Their preventative and proactive approach strengthens their families, neighborhood, and thereby, the whole city. Through the four program areas of education, violence prevention, cultural enrichment, and economic development, Enlace Chicago directly serves more than 5,000 youth and adults. The organization’s impact reaches well beyond this number and benefits our entire community of nearly 100,000 residents by creating opportunities and resources throughout the neighborhood. See www.enlacechicago.org.

Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN) is driven by the spiritual ideals of community service, social justice, and human compassion. IMAN fosters a dynamic and vibrant space for Muslims in urban America by inspiring the larger community toward critical civic engagement exemplifying prophetic compassion in the work for social justice and human dignity beyond the barriers of religion, ethnicity, and nationality. They serve and empower disadvantaged individuals and communities through direct service, organizing and social justice, and arts and culture. See www.imancentral.org.

Kenwood Oakland Community Organization (KOCO) has been an instrument for grassroots democracy in the North Kenwood and Oakland communities for nearly forty years. Founded by religious and community leaders in the 1960’s, KOCO facilitated organizing campaigns that increased the resources and services available to families and residents. KOCO’s organizing agenda is directly informed by its constituency, the low-income and working families within the North Kenwood, Oakland, and its adjacent communities. KOCO’s organizing approach engages residents in identifying the issues that they want to see addressed, and facilitating the planning, strategizing and training opportunities to aid residents in addressing issues. KOCO is a membership-driven organization. KOCO continues its work as a vehicle and voice of low-income and working families. See www.kocoonline.org.

Metropolitan Area Group for Igniting Civilization, Inc. (MAGIC) is a group whose mission is to organize and mobilize residents of Woodlawn and the surrounding areas to create and stimulate social change. Through its prevention projects, leadership development program for teen women and men, support program for people with spinal chord injuries from violence and accidents, youth organizing initiative, after-school apprenticeships, art and culture activities, string instrument program and teen talk show—MAGIC serves over 200 Woodlawn youth annually. See www.magicchicago.org.

Neighbors United is a community organization originally based in the Oak Lawn area’s religious community; it has worked to destroy racial disparities and bring down cultural barriers. Since its inception in 2006 Neighbors United has organized around the belief that all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, or religion, have equal value. Our work now extends beyond Oak Lawn into Beverly, Roseland, and the Pullman community. We have organized specifically around issues of education reform, criminal justice reform, and economic empowerment, along with coalition partners who advocate for change and for policies that recognize basic human rights.

TARGET Area Development Corporation is a regional grassroots social justice organization working in partnership with low-to-moderate income communities to build power and capacity to solve stubborn urban problems using research, organizing, mobilization, and education (ROME) strategies. See www.targetarea.org

West Town Leadership United is a multi-issue grassroots leadership organization located in the West Town area. It uses a “family-focused community building” model to help develop the decision-making and leadership capacities of West Town community residents. The aim of the project is to help residents gain the voice, vision, and skills to build a family friendly community. Families have been involved in identifying the needs of families, creating mutual support efforts and achieving change in the service delivery systems and in public policies that affect West Town Families.
Endnotes

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