

January 8, 2021

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL ANNOUNCES POLICE REFORM BILL

Reforms Focus on Creating Uniformity, Promoting Professionalism, Increasing Transparency

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today announced legislation to improve the police certification and de-certification process as part of his ongoing effort to advocate for policies that make lasting, systemic change to policing in Illinois.

House Bill 841, sponsored by Sen. Elgie Sims and Rep. Justin Slaughter, was initiated by Raoul and focuses on three key areas for reform: creating uniformity for officers and departments across the state, promoting professionalism in law enforcement, and increasing transparency. Currently, the ways in which law enforcement and state's attorneys investigate and take action in response to officer misconduct vary from department to department. Currently the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB) can de-certify an officer only in the event of a felony conviction and a limited list of misdemeanors.

"Now more than ever, meaningful law enforcement reform is essential to restore the public's trust in law enforcement and to hold officers accountable for egregious misconduct that should render them unworthy of being a police officer anywhere in the state," Raoul said. "This is a product of months of collaborative discussion with law enforcement partners and is just one component of what must be a multifaceted approach to improving accountability, transparency, and professionalism among officers. I am committed to continuing to collaborate with our law enforcement partners and reform advocates to improve policing in communities throughout Illinois, and I encourage members of the General Assembly to pass this legislation to help achieve this goal."

"I am gratified that Attorney General Raoul has shown support and leadership on this issue," Sims said. "These reforms seek greater protections not just for the community, but for police officers. Justice is served when it is applied with consistency and due process. Trust is established when the public knows that authority figures are held to account. Inconsistent standards and a lack of transparency create distrust toward officers, and that in turn endangers not only them, but all of us."

"As we address police accountability, it is critical that Illinois strengthen its oversight and enforcement policies for law enforcement," Slaughter said. "This measure puts forth a robust certification and de-certification process that will increase public safety and comprehensively improve policing in Illinois."

HB 841 will make the following improvements to the police certification and de-certification process in Illinois:

- **Creating uniformity during the review process:** Currently, the ILETSB must automatically de-certify an officer only if he or she is convicted of a felony or a limited number of serious misdemeanors. The bill empowers the ILETSB to investigate allegations of serious misconduct that may not automatically lead to de-certification, but conduct that warrants a review of the officer's actions, such as excessive use of force, failure to intervene when another officer uses excessive force, tampering with a body or dash camera, or dishonesty in the reporting of a crime. Following an investigation and hearing in front of an administrative law judge, if the officer is found to have engaged in misconduct then a Certification Review Panel may issue a determination to de-certify the officer. The Certification Review Panel would be composed of representatives from law enforcement, prosecutors, community activists and crime victims' advocates.

- **Promoting professionalism:** A mandatory reporting system would be created in which an officer would report to the ILET SB that they have completed their mandatory in-service training, are still employed by a department, and have not engaged in conduct worthy of de-certification. Frequent reporting and the ability for the ILET SB to audit the training reports helps ensure that officers are in compliance with Illinois' professionalism standards, and that officers in communities are consistently equipped with the current training mandated by the state.
- **Increasing transparency:** The bill would improve upon three areas of information sharing: information shared between hiring departments; information shared between departments and prosecutors; and information shared between the ILET SB and the public. Raoul's proposal includes an expansion of the Officer Professional Conduct database to include relevant disciplinary information, including reports of dishonesty, misconduct, and the results of an officer's de-certification. Expanding the information included in the database means personnel decisions would no longer rely on word-of-mouth recommendations. Additionally, prosecutors will have access to the information needed to make necessary disclosures about officers involved in criminal cases. The expanded and publicly-available database is an important tool that would add greater transparency and accountability to improve public trust in law enforcement.

As part of Attorney General Raoul's calls for comprehensive policing and criminal justice reform, he has advocated for broader pattern and practice authority for state attorneys general and improved crime victim compensation. Raoul worked with the Illinois Black Caucus to include language in House Bill 163 that would give the Illinois Attorney General's office clear authority under state law to investigate and resolve patterns or practices of unconstitutional policing by local and state agencies. Additionally, as recommended by Raoul, HB163 would improve the Crime Victim Compensation Program. The bill would allow the Attorney General's office to more efficiently administer benefits in order to make resources more accessible to survivors. Modernizing the program will not only allow the Attorney General's office to better meet crime victims' immediate needs, but will also contribute to breaking the cycle of community violence.

The [Civil Rights Bureau](#) enforces state and federal civil rights laws to prohibit discrimination in Illinois and advocates for legislation to strengthen those laws. Raoul encourages people who need to [file a complaint to do so online](#) or by calling the Civil Rights Hotline at 1-877-581-3692.

Attorney General Raoul encourages individuals who have been impacted by a violent crime to call his office's Crime Victims Assistance Line at 1-800-228-3368 or visit the [Attorney General's website](#).