

January 10, 2021

ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL TESTIFIES BEFORE HOUSE COMMITTEE REGARDING POLICING AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Chicago — Attorney General Kwame Raoul today testified in support of policing and criminal justice reforms before the House Judiciary – Criminal Committee. Raoul introduced his legislation to improve the police certification and decertification process, and highlighted his proposals to give the Attorney General’s office authority to conduct pattern-and-practice investigations and improve services for crime survivors.

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. Raoul also encouraged lawmakers advance his proposals to give the Attorney General’s office clear, statutory authority to investigate patterns or practices of unconstitutional policing, as well as improve services for survivors of crimes.

“Months may have passed since we watched in horror as George Floyd died under the weight of a Minneapolis police officer’s knee, but the importance of change has not diminished. The urgency for change has only continued as the disparate impacts of policing were on full display this week when we saw how those who participated in a violent mob action at our nation’s Capitol were treated in comparison to the ways peaceful protesters were targeted in the wake of George Floyd’s death,” Raoul said. “I am urging the Legislature to take action before this momentum passes by.”

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. Additionally, 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. HB 841 will improve the police certification and de-certification process in Illinois by creating uniformity during the review process to allow for investigations of serious officer misconduct that may not automatically lead to decertification but still warrants a review of the officer’s actions. The legislation also promotes professionalism by creating a mandatory reporting system to ensure officers are in compliance with state professionalism standards. Additionally, Raoul’s measure will increase transparency by improving information sharing between hiring departments, departments and prosecutors, and the ILETSB and the public.

Attorney General Raoul also encouraged the General Assembly to adopt his proposal to 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. Raoul previously led discussions with Congressional leadership to ensure federal law gives state attorneys general authority to conduct investigations into patterns or practices of unconstitutional policing. The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020 was amended as a result, and the legislation was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives – but still awaits passage in the Senate. Raoul highlighted the need for the Illinois Attorney General’s authority to conduct such investigations to be codified in state law.

Additionally, Raoul is proposing improvements to the state’s Crime Victim Compensation Program that would enable 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](#).