

Attorney General Raoul Applauds Governor Pritzker For Signing Criminal Justice Law

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CHICAGO – Attorney General Kwame Raoul today applauded Governor JB Pritzker for signing into law criminal justice reform legislation that includes Raoul’s initiative to improve the police certification and decertification process. The measure is part of Attorney General Raoul’s ongoing work to advocate for policies that make lasting, systemic change to policing in Illinois. The new law also includes Raoul’s proposals to allow the Attorney General’s office to conduct pattern-and-practice investigations of civil rights violations by law enforcement and improve services for survivors of crimes.

“By signing this law, Governor Pritzker puts Illinois firmly on the path toward improved services

for crime victims, comprehensive criminal justice reform and constitutional policing,” Raoul said. “I am proud of the continued work and collaboration between my office, law enforcement, advocates and legislators to enact meaningful new laws that will not only promote professionalism, increase transparency and restore the public’s trust in law enforcement, but also enhance services available to victims of crime. While today is a significant step forward, lasting reform is a constant work in progress, and I am committed to continuing to work alongside our partners in law enforcement to improve policing in communities across Illinois.”

“This legislation marks a substantial step toward dismantling the systemic racism that plagues our communities, our state and our nation and brings us closer to true safety, true fairness and true justice,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “In this terrible year, in the middle of a brutal viral pandemic that hurt Black people and Brown people disproportionately, lawmakers fought to address the pandemic of systemic racism in the wake of national protests. This bill was also infused with solutions from individuals most directly impacted: survivors of domestic violence, survivors of crime, and those who have been detained pre-trial only because they are poor. Today we advance our values in the law – progress secured despite the pandemic, because of the passion and push of the Legislative Black Caucus, activists, advocates, and residents intent on leaving a better Illinois for all our children.”

House Bill 3653 was sponsored by Sen. Elgie Sims and Rep. Justin Slaughter and includes Raoul’s proposal for improving the police certification and decertification process that focuses on three key areas for reform: creating uniformity for officers and departments across the state, promoting professionalism in law enforcement, and increasing transparency.

Before this new law, the ways in which law enforcement and state’s attorneys investigate and take action in response to officer misconduct varied from department to department. Additionally, the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board (ILETSB) could decertify an officer only in the event of a felony conviction and a limited list of misdemeanors. Raoul’s measure will improve the police certification and decertification 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 law 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’s 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 also was included in the legislation and signed into law today. 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 last year by the U.S. House of Representatives – but not by the U.S. Senate. The law signed today codifies the Illinois Attorney General’s authority to conduct such investigations in state law.

Additionally, Governor Pritzker signed into law Raoul’s 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 not only will allow the Attorney General’s office to better meet crime victims’ immediate needs but also will contribute to breaking the cycle of community violence.

The Attorney General’s 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.

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