

Valerie F. Leonard Named to Racial and Ethnic Impact Research Task Force



Valerie F. Leonard has been selected to serve on the Racial and Ethnic Impact Research Task Force. The Racial and Ethnic Impact (REI) Research Task Force Act was co-sponsored by Senator Mattie Hunter (D-Chicago) and Representative La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) and signed into law on August 16, 2011, by Illinois Governor Pat Quinn after unanimous passage in the State General Assembly (SB 2271 / PA 97-0433). The REI Research Task Force is charged with determining a practical method for the standardized collection and analysis of data on the racial and ethnic identity of arrestees by State and local law enforcement agencies. An improved understanding of where, why, and how African Americans have come to be disproportionately

represented in the criminal justice system can lead to an improved ability to address its causes and improve the dispensation of justice.

The REI Research Task Force is composed of officially appointed legislators, members of the criminal justice system, social service agencies, and representatives from minority communities. Thirteen members were named by the enabling legislation. General Assembly leadership is in the process of appointing eight legislative members. The Co-Chairs are in the process of appointing up to eight members representing minority communities within Illinois, groups involved in the improvement of the administration of justice, behavioral health, criminal justice, law enforcement, and the rehabilitation of former inmates, community groups, and other interested parties. Community representatives include Walter Boyd, Marian Perkins, Standish Willis, Michael Rodriguez, Lynn Todman, Grady Norwood, Andre Hines and Valerie F. Leonard. The Task Force will hold at least one public hearing and deliver a final report with findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by July 1, 2012.