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**NEWS RELEASE**  
**JOBS FLEE INNER CITY LEAVING YOUNG PEOPLE STRANDED AND UNEMPLOYED**  
*New Report Details a Crisis of Disconnected Youth in Chicago*

**CHICAGO --** A new report, *Abandoned in their Neighborhoods: Youth Joblessness Amidst the Flight of Industry and Opportunity*, commissioned by the Alternative Schools Network (ASN) and developed by the University of Illinois at Chicago's Great Cities Institute (GCI) found strong evidence that teens and young adults are suffering from "a downward and long-term trend of economic abandonment in many of Chicago's neighborhoods, leaving behind chronic and concentrated conditions of joblessness."

The report was released at a youth hearing, *More Jobs, Less Violence – Connecting Youth to a Brighter Future*. During the hearing, U.S. Sen. Richard "Dick" Durbin, Minority Whip, U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-9, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Chicago Deputy Mayor Andrea Zopp led a spirited discussion with young people who live in Chicago's racially concentrated areas of poverty and leaders from the sponsoring agencies on how to tackle the problem of bringing more jobs to hard-hit areas and preparing young people to fill those jobs.

"The best anti-poverty, anti-crime program is a job," Durbin said. "That's why I'm committed to making vital federal investments in job training and economic development for youth in Chicago and across the country. If we can start providing these young people with more employment opportunities, we could see a dramatic reduction in the violence in our city. I applaud the Alternative Schools Network and the Chicago Urban League for their important work on this issue, and I look forward to working with them to create more opportunities for young people to succeed and climb the economic ladder."

The connection between the concentrated joblessness and the city's spate of violence becomes obvious when considering the results of another recent study, this one from the University of Chicago Crime Lab, which shows that despite having only 9 percent of Chicago's population, five neighborhoods – Austin, Englewood, New City, West Englewood and Greater Grand Crossing – accounted for 32 percent of homicides in 2016. **The GCI report found that in those neighborhoods jobless rates for teens (16-19), based on 2011-2015 ACS Data, stood at Austin 91 percent, Englewood 89 percent, New City 79 percent, West Englewood 88 percent, and Greater Grand Crossing 91.8 percent. For young adults (20-24) joblessness was at Austin 59 percent, Englewood 67 percent, New City 49 percent, West Englewood 70 percent and Greater Grand Crossing 66 percent.**

"This hearing opens a discussion on a commonly over-looked prescription for Chicago's gun violence epidemic: youth employment," Schakowsky said. "Our youth are willing and ready to work, but the opportunities are not here. If we want to end the gun violence epidemic, we must address youth unemployment, especially among minorities. Helping the young people in our communities to gain access to meaningful employment is one of the best tools Chicago has to end the bloodshed. If our President is truly interested in helping to stop the violence in Chicago, he should start by providing young people, especially those in low income communities, with good paying jobs."

The new GCI report shows that the employment crisis, especially for Black and Latino youths, is "tied to long range trends in the overall loss of manufacturing jobs; and most notably, that joblessness among young people is tied to the emptying out of jobs from neighborhoods, which is in contrast to jobs that are being centralized in Chicago's downtown areas where whites are employed in professional and related services."

"Throughout my life -- as a mother, teacher and public official -- I have always understood the importance of jobs for young people," Preckwinkle said. "The correlation between productive activity and personal growth and development is undeniable. At work, a young person may find the mentor who imparts life-changing lessons, and when a circle of friends includes young people with jobs, they share hope and rising expectations. We must work together and muster all available resources to connect our young people to opportunity."

The GCI report found that despite a national economic recovery, Chicago remains one of the nation's leaders in youth joblessness, especially for Black and Latino young men. **Some 89 percent of Chicago's Black male teens (16-19)**

and 82 percent of Latinos were out of work in 2015, compared to all teens that age at 71 percent both in Illinois and nationwide. For 20-24 year-olds, 43 percent of Black men, 18 percent of Latino and 9 percent of white young men were jobless and out of school in Chicago. This is compared to 37 percent for Black men and 14 percent for Latino men in that age group in Illinois and 29 percent for Black men and 16 percent for Latino men nationwide.

The crisis was compounded by the hard-hit Chicago young people took from the steady outflow of the relatively higher-paying manufacturing jobs from 1960 to 2015. **In 1960, 45 percent Latino and 22 percent of Black teens (16-19) in Chicago who had jobs worked in manufacturing. By 2015, that number was 6 percent for Latinos and 0.4 percent for Blacks. For young adults (20-24), 58 percent of Latinos and 30 percent of Blacks who had jobs were working in manufacturing in 1960 compared to 10 percent for Latinos and 3 percent of Blacks in 2015.**

“This is a monumental policy failure,” said Jack Wuest, Alternative Schools Network executive director. “The best jobs are moving North and East, while Black and Latino youths are locked into the South, Southwest, Northwest and West sides. It’s little wonder that so many of our youth succumb to the gangs when the programs to give them an alternative are being squeezed out or shut down. The young people are telling us they want jobs. But there are no jobs they can get to. This is a litany I will keep repeating: Investments in creating meaningful work for these youth will pay dividends immediately and for years to come. A failure to do so has had and will continue to have dire consequences for our city and our state.”

## **KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REPORT**

### ***PAINFULLY SLOW RECOVERY FOR CHICAGO’S INNER-CITY YOUTH***

For Chicago’s Black and Latino youth, if jobs are coming back at all after the Great Recession, they are doing so more slowly than in other places. In 2015, employment conditions in Chicago were worse than in Illinois and the U.S. for 16 to 19 and 20 to 24 year olds.

- **While employment has improved marginally for Chicago’s Black teens (16-19) with 15 percent working in 2015 from 9.6 percent in 2010, the rate for Latino teens continues to drop, with only 18.5 percent working in 2015, down from nearly 23 percent in 2010.**
- **Black young adults (20-24) in Chicago continue to struggle with 39 percent out of school and out of work in 2015, compared to 33 percent in Illinois and 25 percent nationwide. For Latino young adults, 21 percent were out of school and jobless in Chicago, compared to 16.5 percent in Illinois and 19 percent nationwide.**

### ***THE JOBS MOVED OUT***

GCI researchers dug into data that shows a connection between the joblessness of young people in Chicago’s majority Black and Latino neighborhoods and the emptying out of jobs from those neighborhoods. In contrast jobs have moved to Chicago’s downtown areas where mostly whites are employed in professional and related services.

- **In 1970 most retail jobs were in zip codes on the West Side, South Side, the Loop and north of the Loop. The four zip codes with the most retail jobs in Chicago in 2015 were all located north of the Loop, though retail clusters existed on the North, Northwest, and Southwest Sides of the City.**
- **In 1970, Zip codes making up the center portion of Chicago had a cluster of manufacturing jobs. Those with the highest number of manufacturing jobs included 60639 (33,000) and 60607 (20,896) on the West Side of Chicago, 60609 (22,335) and 60632 (22,051) on Chicago’s Southwest Side, 60611 (22,334) near the Loop, 60642+60622 (21,076) on the Far North Side, and 60618 (21,033) on Chicago’s North Side. By 2015 the three zip codes with the most manufacturing jobs included 60614 (8,180), 60609 (6,373), and 60633 (5,414). No other zip code areas had more than 5,000 manufacturing jobs.**
- **For total private-sector jobs, jobs started to become concentrated in the present day Loop, while the number of jobs on the Southwest Side and West Side decreased. By 2015 Zip codes around Englewood and West Englewood and other South Side areas have comparatively very few jobs to other zip codes. Most of the jobs are located the central portion of the city in the Loop and in community areas of River North, New East Side and Magnificent Mile.**

### ***JOBLESSNESS AMONG CHICAGO YOUTH CONCENTRATED IN AREAS WHERE BLACKS AND LATINOS LIVE***

For 16 to 19 year olds, communities with high jobless rates are primarily located on the predominantly Black West, South, and Far South sides, with notably high jobless rates on predominantly Latino Northwest and Southwest sides. The lowest rates are in community areas bordering Lake Michigan near the Loop and North Side and those on the Far North Side with the highest concentrations of White population.

Jobless rates for 20 to 24 year olds by community areas show a sharp contrast between the predominantly Black South and West sides and all other parts of the city that have comparably lower jobless rates. The lowest jobless rates in the city are in the predominantly white community areas on the North and Far North sides where rates are less than half of those on the South and West sides.

- **Jobless rates for 16 to 19 year-olds in community areas that have a predominantly African American population range from 96 percent in Pullman on the South Side to 91 percent in West Side Austin. Predominantly Latino community areas on the Southwest and Northwest sides had jobless rates between 80 and 90 percent. Most areas where rates were lower than 80 percent were on the North and Far Northwest sides.**
- **For 20 to 24 year-olds, jobless rates on the South and West sides ranged from 72 percent in East Garfield Park and 70 percent in West Englewood to 58 percent in West Garfield Park. Community areas on the North and Northwest sides ranged from 17 percent in Lakeview to 27 percent in Lincoln Square.**

"In the process of assembling, organizing and analyzing this data, one thing became very clear to us," said Teresa Córdova, Director of the Great Cities Institute. "The roots of the joblessness crisis are structural and reflective of long term trend. We continue to see the devastating impact for generations of young people who have no opportunity to work. It is a tragedy for those young people, their households, their communities, and the city as a whole."

Hearing conveners, including the Alternative Schools Network, Chicago Urban League, Westside Health Authority, Chicago Area Project, Black United Fund of Illinois, the National Youth Advocate Program, Youth Connection Charter School, La Casa Norte, Lawrence Hall, Mount Sinai Medical Center, Metropolitan Family Services and Heartland Alliance organized a **panel comprising six young people and two representatives from businesses that employ youth**. They kicked off a discussion at the Chicago Urban League event with the agency leaders, elected officials and youth in attendance about what it's like to be jobless in Chicago, what works for young people and employers and how to advance a policy agenda, put forth by the conveners, of expanding job opportunities and job preparedness programs through youth employment programs.

"The escalating joblessness for our Black and Brown youth reflects a sustained lack of effective private and public interventions," said Shari Runner, President and CEO of the Chicago Urban League. "Not only is failing to adequately address this crisis fueling the city's underground economy and gun violence, but it is further entrenching racial inequality. We must collectively reinvest with a renewed sense of urgency to advance opportunities so that all of our young people may thrive."

**The panel moderator was Susan Richardson, Editor & Publisher of the Chicago Reporter.**

**Elected officials in attendance included:**

- **U.S. Sen. Richard "Dick" Durbin, Minority Whip**
- **U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-9**
- **Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle**
- **Andrea Zopp, City of Chicago Deputy Mayor, Chief Neighborhood Development Officer**
- **IL State Sens. Mattie Hunter, D-3**
- **IL State Reps. Kelly Burke, D-36; Will Davis, D-30; La Shawn Ford, D-8; Elizabeth Hernandez, D-24; Camille Lilly, D-78; Theresa Mah, D-2; Juliana Stratton, D-5 & Arthur Turner, D-9**
- **City of Chicago Aldermen Pat Dowell, Ward 3; Jason Ervin, Ward 28; Sophia King, Ward 4; Emma Mitts, Ward 37; Harry Osterman, Ward 48; Roderick Sawyer, Ward 6; Michael Scott Jr., Ward 24; & Christopher Taliaferro, Ward 29**
- **Cook County Commissioners Richard R. Boykin, D-1, Bridget Gainer, D-10, Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, D-7 & Robert Steele's Assistant, David Evers**
- **Executive Director, Justice Advisory Council, Lanetta Haynes Turner**

**Presenters included:**

- **Shari Runner, President & CEO, Chicago Urban League**
- **Jesse Ruiz, Chairman, Chicago Park District**
- **Sheila Venson, Executive Director, Youth Connection Charter School**
- **Teresa Córdova, Director, University of Illinois at Chicago Great Cities Institute**
- **Jack Wuest, Executive Director, Alternative Schools Network**

#### **ABOUT ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS NETWORK**

The Alternative Schools Network (ASN) is a not-for-profit organization in Chicago working to provide quality education with a specific emphasis on inner-city children, youth and adults. Since 1973, ASN has been supporting community based and community-run programs to develop and expand training and other educational services in Chicago's inner-city neighborhoods. In addition to supporting direct services, ASN has been a consistent and effective advocate for community-based services whereby the people involved are active participants in developing and running programs – not passive recipients of services. To shape policies and programs, ASN has built an impressive track record of operating successful education, employment and support service programs. For more information please visit [www.asnchicago.org](http://www.asnchicago.org).

**ABOUT THE GREAT CITIES INSTITUTE**

UIC Great Cities Institute is to link its academic resources with a range of partners to address urban issues by providing research, policy analysis and program development. Tied to the University of Illinois at Chicago Great Cities Commitment, GCI seeks to improve quality of life in Chicago, its metropolitan region and cities throughout the world. <https://greatcities.uic.edu>

**ABOUT THE CHICAGO URBAN LEAGUE**

Established in 1916, the Chicago Urban League is a civil rights organization that empowers and inspires individuals to reach and exceed their economic potential. The Chicago Urban League supports and advocates for economic, educational and social progress for African-Americans through our agenda focused exclusively on economic empowerment as the key driver for social change. For more information, visit [www.thechicagourbanleague.org](http://www.thechicagourbanleague.org).

For a complete copy of the report: <http://www.asnchicago.org/youth-employment-hearing-2017>.

For live streaming go to [CANTV.ORG/LIVE](http://CANTV.ORG/LIVE) or on cable watch Channel 27.

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