**News…**

 ***from State Representative Melissa Conyears-Ervin***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE                                          FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Sept. 1, 2017 State Rep. Melissa Conyears-Ervin

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**Conyears-Ervin’s Measure to Combating Hate Crimes Becomes Law**

**SPRINGFIELD, Ill.** – Punishments for criminals who commit hate crimes will be both tougher and smarter under a new law measure backed by state Rep. Melissa Conyears-Ervin, D-Chicago.

“The racial tensions that exist in our country have brought extreme violence into communities across the nation, and Illinois has the responsibility to demonstrate that we will not accept intolerance towards others because of the color of their skin,” said Conyears-Ervin. “We must take what happened in Charlottesville as a sign that not enough resources are being dedicated to ensure that everyone, no matter where they are from or what they look like, is treated equally.”

Conyears-Ervin supported House Bill 2390, which extends the penalties for racially, religiously and ethnically motivated crimes by allowing criminals who attack houses of worship to be charged with a hate crime. The bill also requires that the offender performs community service and takes an educational class about why committing such crimes is wrong. The bill was signed into law last week. Conyears-Ervin is hoping that by having an open dialogue about discrimination, people will be more accepting of different cultural groups.

“Far too many people are uneducated on the traditions of communities different from their own, often resulting in fear and intolerance towards other people,” said Conyears-Ervin. “We must educate everyone about the differences that cultures may have and what makes us all similar.”

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