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### **Ill. Sen. Kwame Raoul Receives 2010 ‘Paul Simon Courage in Public Service Award’**

*Lutheran Groups Honor Legislator for Commitment to Just, Compassionate Public Policy*

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**SPRINGFIELD, Illinois** – On April 21, State Senator **Kwame Raoul** (D-Chicago, 13<sup>th</sup> District) received the annual *Paul Simon Courage in Public Service Award* during Lutheran Day activities at the State Capitol. The award was presented by a coalition of Lutheran-affiliated social service, health care and advocacy groups. The award was created in 2004 by several Lutheran organizations, along with Patti Simon, widow of the late senator, to recognize Illinois public officials who demonstrate a commitment to just, compassionate and responsible public policy.

“We are honored to present the Paul Simon Courage in Public Service Award to Sen. Raoul for his persistent public leadership for balanced and restorative justice — especially in the area of our state’s policies regarding juvenile youth,” says Daniel Schwick, assistant to the president at Des Plaines-based Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) and coordinator of Lutheran Day. Schwick, and Dave Roth, director of advocacy and civic engagement at Lutheran Child and Family Services, presented the award to Sen. Raoul, “Chicago’s Lakefront Senator,” who represents Chicago neighborhoods including Hyde Park, Kenwood, South Shore and the South Loop.

Sen. Raoul was the co-sponsor of Senate Bill 2275, which raised the age of juvenile court jurisdiction in Illinois from a youth’s 17<sup>th</sup> birthday to his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday for misdemeanor offenses. The bill also set up a task force to study the effect of raising the age for felony offenses. The bill became effective on January 1, 2010. One thing the bill does is to extend the services of the juvenile court — such as mental health, drug treatment and more appropriate community-based services — to the 17-year-old age group.

“I am truly humbled to receive an award in the name of Paul Simon — he is certainly one of my heroes,” said Raoul during his acceptance speech, who noted that he began his career as a juvenile prosecutor. It was at through that work that he learned that “it is better to be smart on crime than tough on crime,” he said, explaining, “There are many lives we should not give up on because these kids can be saved, redirected — thanks to the services that you good people provide,” acknowledging the human service providers in the audience. “I look forward to working with those who embrace [this award’s] ideals, as we balance compassion and responsibility in government.”

Lutheran Day was created in 2004 when two Lutheran human service provider organizations – LSSI and Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois (LCFS) – recognized that they had

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common concerns relating to their partnerships with state government, specifically with inadequate state funding for human services and the larger issue of inadequate and unsustainable state revenue to cover the cost of all state programs. As a result of those meetings, the two organizations resolved to reach out to other Lutheran human service provider organizations in Illinois to combine and organize their voices and constituencies to support the strengthening of the public-private human services safety net in Illinois

Lutheran agencies involved in Lutheran Day 2010 include Lutheran Social Services of Illinois; Lutheran Child and Family Services; Lutheran Life Communities; Advocate Health Care; Lutheran Senior Services; Mosaic; Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services; Concordia Place; Saint Luke Ministries; and Bethel New Life. Lutheran Advocacy-Illinois, a grassroots justice advocacy organization, also sponsored Lutheran Day.

For more information on Lutheran Day, visit [www.LutheranDay.org](http://www.LutheranDay.org).

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