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### ***Statement on Fight to End the Early Release of Violent Offenders***

During the primary campaigns, we've heard a lot about Illinois releasing more than one thousand criminals back into their communities after serving only days in prison.

I'm leading the fight to put an end to that practice once and for all. I understand that Illinois needs to find a way to save money, but letting violent prisoners out early is too dangerous a step to take.

I praise the governor for putting an end to this program, but we need to put in place regulations to make sure this never happens again.

The Meritorious Good Time program does serve a purpose. Low-risk nonviolent offenders, who earn good-behavior status after 60 days in prison, can qualify for early release.

Recently, the program was accelerated to cut the budget, reducing the number of days served. It was discovered later that more than 20 of the released inmates were convicted of violent crimes. And now more than 50 released inmates are already back in jail.

I wrote Senate Bill 1013 to make 60 days in prison a rock-bottom minimum before good-behavior status can even be considered. The director of the department of corrections has to put that status determination in writing, and local authorities must be notified at least 14 days before the inmate is released.

These new rules should help provide clearer guidance for the Meritorious Good Time program and prevent future abuse. They also guarantee that prosecutors know when potentially dangerous criminals are returning to their communities, which helps improve the public safety.

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