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Advocates Raise Alarm On Youth Unemployment in Cook County Hearing

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Commissioner Jesus Garcia speaks as Commissioner Larry Suffredin listens at a hearing on youth unemployment. (Credit: Craig Dellimore)

Click the following link to listen to WBBM 780's Craig Dellimore from March 22, 2016 - <http://chicago.cbslocal.com/2016/03/22/advocates-raise-alarm-on-youth-unemployment-in-cook-county-hearing/>

(CBS) — A Cook County Board hearing is raising the alarm about youth unemployment in the region. Simply put, it's bad, and getting worse, reports WBBM Political Editor Craig Dellimore.

Quiwana Bell of the Westside Health Authority said simply there are not enough jobs for African-American and Latino young people who want and need them.

“Especially for some communities that have upwards of 30 percent of their population are these young people who are doing absolutely nothing and it's taking a toll on our communities in major ways,” Bell said.

Fr. Michael Pflieger whose St. Sabina Church is in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood said there is a direct line between youth unemployment and crime.

“We can't keep just telling people our youth don't sell drugs, put down the guns, be nice people and not offer them anything to pick up or to do with their lives,” Pflieger said.

County Board President Toni Preckwinkle said a solution sounds simple. She said federal dollars allocated to summer youth employment are needed as well as adding to existing funds to the Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership. But gridlock in Washington and Springfield stand in the way.