



Illinois Capitol Update

March 9, 2025

The Senate returns to Springfield this week while the House remains out of session. Senators are working toward their committee deadline for substantive legislation at the end of the week, an important benchmark that helps determine which bills remain viable moving forward this spring. As is often the case, however, deadline extensions remain a possibility for measures that require additional work or negotiation.

Meanwhile, Illinois is one week away from the March 17 primary election, which will determine the candidates who advance to the November general election.

The House is not expected back in Springfield until Wednesday, March 18, and the Senate will not be in session next week.

SGOP Leadership Shuffle: Senate Republicans have solidified their leadership team following Sen. Neil Anderson's (R-Andalusia) resignation from caucus leadership last month. Sen. Jason Plummer (R-Edwardsville) is now serving as caucus chair, the role Sen. Anderson previously served. Sen. Sally Turner (R-Beason) has been appointed assistant Republican leader. Sen. Chapin Rose (R-Mahomet) was elevated to Minority Caucus Whip, filling Sen. Turner's previous role.

Rep. Harry Benton (D-Plainfield) has been removed from the caucus and all eight of his committee assignments. Benton did not return messages seeking comment and when reached, House Speaker Chris Welch's spokesperson had no comment.

Below are the **key dates** from each chamber's calendar:

Mar. 13, 2026: Senate - SB Substantive Committee Deadline

Mar. 17, 2026: Primary Election

Mar. 27, 2026: House - HB Substantive Committee Deadline

Apr. 17, 2026: House/Senate - First Chamber - Third Reading Deadline

May 8, 2026: House/Senate - Second Chamber - Substantive Committee Deadline

May 22, 2026: House/Senate - Second Chamber - Third Reading Deadline

May 31, 2026: Adjournment

Campaign Updates

With five open U.S. House seats and an open Senate race on the ballot, Illinois is experiencing an unusually competitive election cycle. Illinois primary races are seeing a surge of outside spending from national interest groups and corporations. Super PACs backed by pro-Israel organizations (AIPAC and affiliated PACs), cryptocurrency interests (Fairshake), Pritzker-backed Illinois Future PAC, DraftKings, and Meta have poured millions into ads and mailers supporting preferred candidates in several competitive congressional and legislative contests. Advocacy networks, rather than local donors, are increasingly shaping primary elections through independent expenditure campaigns. The 2026 Illinois primary election is scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2026.

Fiscal & Budget

Revenue Update: COGFA Projects Short-Term Revenue Growth, Longer-Term Decline

Illinois' legislative forecasting agency reported that state revenues are expected to finish the current fiscal year about \$755 million higher than the estimate used in Gov. JB Pritzker's budget proposal, reflecting stronger-than-anticipated collections. However, the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability (COGFA) warned the uptick may be temporary, projecting that FY27 revenues could decline by roughly \$458 million compared with the current fiscal year, highlighting ongoing uncertainty in the state's financial outlook.

Policy Updates

Welch Launches House Democratic AI Working Group

House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch announced the creation of a House Democratic AI Working Group to develop a comprehensive policy framework for artificial intelligence in Illinois. The effort will be led by Rep. Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz (D-Glenview) and organized into five subgroups focused on issues including criminal law and public safety, elections and information integrity, consumer protection and labor, children's online safety, and government use of emerging technologies. Welch said the initiative aims to address AI's economic potential while safeguarding privacy, public safety, and democratic institutions.

Lawmakers Delay Cook County Property Tax Debt Sale

Illinois lawmakers passed House Bill 598 to postpone the annual Cook County property tax debt sale from March 10 to December 1, 2026 while they continue working on reforms to bring state law into compliance with a 2023 U.S. Supreme Court decision. The delay also pauses interest on the debt but could expose county treasurers to legal challenges as they work toward broader changes to protect homeowners and align with constitutional requirements. Next step: the bill moves to the governor's desk for approval.

Lawmakers Advance Bill Aimed at Keeping Bears in Illinois

Illinois lawmakers have taken an initial step toward keeping the Chicago Bears in the state, advancing legislation through the House Revenue committee that would allow large "mega-projects" like a new stadium to negotiate payments in lieu of property taxes (PILOT) with local governments, providing long-term tax certainty for developers. Members of both parties raised concerns in committee, and it did not come up for a vote in the full House, which won't return for session until March 18. The proposal is viewed as key to the Bears' plan for a new domed stadium in Arlington Heights. Meanwhile, Indiana officials are advancing their own incentives and stadium financing plan in Hammond.

ICC Approves 2026 Renewable Procurement Plan

The Illinois Commerce Commission approved the Illinois Power Agency's 2026 Long-Term Renewable Resources Procurement Plan, which will guide procurement of renewable energy credits and new clean energy generation for 2026–2027 and 2027–2028. The plan supports continued development of utility-scale and community solar, wind, hydropower, and other renewable projects serving ComEd, Ameren Illinois, and MidAmerican customers, while incorporating program adjustments intended to address funding pressures and growing electricity demand.

Illinois Issues First License Under International Medical Graduate Program

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) has issued the first license under the state's International Medical Graduate (IMG) licensure pathway, a program created four years ago to help address healthcare workforce shortages. The pathway allows internationally trained physicians to practice under the supervision of a licensed physician at an approved institution for two years before becoming eligible for a restricted license and, eventually, full Illinois licensure. State officials say the program is intended to expand the healthcare workforce and improve access to care in shortage areas.

IDFPR Expands CORE Licensing System

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) announced the completion of Phase 3.3 of its CORE (Comprehensive Online Regulatory Environment) licensing system, adding eight additional license types to the platform, including several related to boxing and full-contact martial arts events. The CORE modernization effort began with its first pilot phase in October 2024, and the latest update brings the system to 129 license types now accepting new applications online. IDFPR ultimately regulates more than 100 professions and nearly 300 license types statewide, with additional phases still planned to transition the Divisions of Real Estate, Banking, and Financial Institutions onto the platform.

Pritzker Issues Executive Order to Advance New Nuclear Development

Gov. JB Pritzker signed an executive order directing state energy agencies to begin planning for the development of new nuclear power in Illinois, with a goal of bringing up to 2 gigawatts of new nuclear capacity online by 2033. The order instructs the Illinois Power Agency and Illinois Commerce Commission to gather information from potential developers and communities interested in hosting facilities and evaluate costs, safety standards, and financing options. The effort is intended to address projected electricity demand and support the state's long-term transition to carbon-free energy.

Senate Confirms Meister as Illinois Auditor General

The Illinois Senate has confirmed Chris Meister as the state's next Auditor General following a unanimous recommendation from the Legislative Audit Commission. Meister has served as executive director of the Illinois Finance Authority since 2009, overseeing bond programs and major financing initiatives, including the state's Clean Water Initiative. On May 1st, he will replace retiring Auditor General Frank Mautino, who has held the post since 2016.

\$1.1 Billion in Erased Medical Debt for 500,000 Illinoisans

Gov. JB Pritzker announced Illinois has erased more than \$1.1 billion in medical debt for over 500,000 residents through the Illinois Medical Debt Relief Program. The state invested nearly \$10 million to eliminate the debt and yielded over \$100 in medical relief for every dollar spent. Residents on average saw \$1,200 in relief, with one person receiving \$300,000 in relief.

Chicago Council Fails to Override Hemp Ban Veto

The Chicago City Council failed to override Mayor Brandon Johnson's veto of an ordinance that would have banned most intoxicating hemp-derived products. The override effort fell short of the required votes, leaving current sales in place. Supporters cited youth safety concerns, while opponents argued a ban would hurt small businesses and called for stronger regulation instead.

Illinois Pushes Back on Proposal to Spread Indiana Coal Plant Costs

A dispute is emerging over who should pay to keep an Indiana coal plant operating. After the U.S. Department of Energy ordered Northern Indiana Public Service Co. to keep units at the R.M. Schahfer Generating Station online for reliability reasons, the utility filed a petition with federal regulators seeking

to recover the costs across the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) region, which includes parts of Illinois. Illinois regulators objected, arguing that customers outside Indiana should not be required to subsidize the plant and calling the proposal premature while cost allocation and reliability impacts are still being evaluated.

Hawthorne Race Course Files for Chapter 11

Hawthorne Race Course in Stickney has filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, seeking to restructure its debt and attract new investment while continuing operations. The 134-year-old track, one of the last remaining horse racing venues in Illinois, reported assets between \$50 million and \$100 million and liabilities ranging from \$100 million to \$500 million in its filing. Track officials say the reorganization is intended to stabilize finances and preserve racing in northern Illinois, though the future of the facility remains uncertain as the company searches for investors and works through the bankruptcy process.

CSL Announces \$1.5B Manufacturing Expansion in Kankakee

Global biopharmaceutical company CSL plans to invest \$1.5 billion to build a new manufacturing facility at its Kankakee campus, creating 300 new jobs and retaining more than 1,200 existing positions. The project, one of the largest life sciences investments in Illinois history, will expand production of plasma-derived immunoglobulin therapies and consolidate the company's U.S. manufacturing process at the Illinois site, with support from state economic development incentives.

AbbVie Expanding North Chicago Manufacturing Campus

AbbVie announced plans to invest \$380 million to build two new active pharmaceutical ingredient manufacturing facilities at its North Chicago campus, a project expected to create 300 new full-time jobs. State officials say the expansion will strengthen Illinois' life sciences sector and support production of neuroscience and obesity-related medicines, adding to more than \$575 million in recent investments at the site.

Teklab Opens New Laboratory Facility in Collinsville

Teklab has opened a 36,500-square-foot laboratory facility in Collinsville, a project expected to retain 100 existing jobs and create 40 new full-time positions. The new site will expand the company's capacity to provide environmental analytical services and support growing demand in the Midwest, with the project receiving state support through a DCEO EDGE incentive agreement.

Illinois EPA Offering Grants for Water Facility Energy Upgrades

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency announced \$1.5 million in grant funding to support energy efficiency upgrades at publicly owned drinking water treatment facilities. Individual grants ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 will be available for projects such as pump and motor upgrades, variable frequency drives, and HVAC or lighting improvements, with a 10–20% local match required. Applications are due May 4, 2026, with funding supported through the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

DMG MORI Announces \$40.5M Illinois Expansion

DMG MORI Federal Services will invest \$40.5 million to establish a new advanced manufacturing and R&D facility in Chicago, creating 74 new full-time jobs. The project will also include a workforce training partnership with City Colleges of Chicago and is supported by state incentives through the EDGE program.