



ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report October 2, 2023

Candidates for the U.S. Congress and Illinois House and Senate seats are making campaign announcements and passing petitions to get on the March 2023 primary ballot. We will have a better sense of who will be running after the petition filing period closes on December 4.

The Illinois General Assembly's fall veto session will take place **October 24-26 and November 7-9**.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS

State Rep. **Randy Frese** (R-Quincy) will not seek another term in the 99th Illinois House District, which covers west central Illinois. Frese, who has represented the district since 2015, will serve for the remainder of his term. He has already expressed support for the first person to announce interest in running – **Kyle Moore**, former Quincy mayor and current president and CEO of the Great River Economic Development Foundation.

Frese is the 8th state legislator to make such an announcement this fall. He joins Reps. **Jonathan Carroll** (D-Northbrook), **Dan Caulkins** (R-Decatur), **John Egofske** (R-Lemont), **Jenn Ladisch Douglass** (D-Elmhurst), **Michael Marron** (R-Fithian); and Sens. **Tom Bennett** (R-Gibson City) and **Win Stoller** (R-Peoria) – all of whom will serve out their current terms but not seek re-election.

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation has announced that **Susana Soriano** will serve as the next Director of Banking. Appointed by Gov. **JB Pritzker**, Soriano previously served as the Deputy Director of Banking after joining IDFPR in October 2020. Her appointment is pending confirmation by the Illinois Senate.

SPEAKER INTRODUCES BILL TO ALLOW UNIONIZED LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Illinois House Speaker **Emanuel "Chris" Welch** has filed legislation to authorize legislative staff to form a union and engage in collective bargaining. [House Bill 4148](#), which would create the Legislative Employee Labor Relations Act, comes in response to a monthslong effort by Democratic staff in the speaker's office to unionize and negotiate wages, hours and other working conditions.

ISBE HOLDING PUBLIC HEARINGS ON STATE FUNDING OF SCHOOLS

The Illinois State Board of Education will hold a series of public hearings in October to gather feedback on Illinois public education funding that will inform the board's recommendations to lawmakers for Fiscal Year 2025 and beyond. The first two hearings will take place October 3 and October 5, following by a final hearing October 30.

ISBE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR GREEN RIBBON SCHOOL PROGRAM

ISBE is now accepting applications for the 2023-2024 Green Ribbon Schools Award, recognizing and celebrating Illinois schools' dedication to environmental education and sustainability. The award is sponsored in collaboration with the Illinois Green Alliance and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Applications are due by December 22. Last year's awardees were Prairie Trails School in River Trails District 26 in Mount Prospect and Huntley Community School District 158 in Algonquin.

CHICAGO SCHOOL BOARD REMAP HEARINGS SET

The Senate Special Committee on the Chicago Elected Representative School Board will be meeting again soon to hear testimony on drawing Chicago's school board district map and the "transition process" to a fully elected school board. The hearings will be virtual at ilga.gov on October 3 and October 12. The General Assembly faces an April 2024 deadline to draw Chicago school board districts, which must be consistent with the Illinois Voting Rights Act. That law ensures that districts are crafted in a way that preserves clusters of minority voters if they are of size or cohesion to exert collective electoral power. Currently appointed by the mayor of Chicago, the Chicago Board of Education will transition to become fully elected over the course of a two-year hybrid period.

HOUSE HEARING ON PROFESSIONAL LICENSE DELAYS

The House Health Care Licenses Committee recently heard more than two hours of testimony from healthcare-related entities with concerns about the excessive delays in IDFPD licensing processes. The delays have resulted in people losing jobs, a potential shortage in hospital personnel, and various hardships for licensed persons. The department provided few answers to resolving what IDFPD Secretary Mario Treto characterized as a "crisis" anytime soon. Treto attributed the delays to technological issues and insufficient staffing levels. Unfortunately, IDFPD's months-long effort to procure new licensing software through a joint purchase master contract failed early last week. It appears that the agency did not seek information from vendors or put out a request for proposals prior to deciding to seek a vendor using a master contract. The use of master contracts is common within state government and can result in significant savings for the state if procured appropriately. As a result, the agency will need to restart the procurement process.

The House Health Care Licensing & House Labor and Commerce committees will meet jointly on October 3 in Chicago to discuss healthcare worker staffing ratios.

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HEARING ON SOCIAL MEDIA CHILD SAFETY PROPOSAL

Last week The Senate Judiciary Committee met to discuss [Senate Bill 1126](#) (sponsored by Sen. **Sue Rezin**, R-Morris), which creates new regulations for websites and social media aimed at requiring age-appropriate design. Testimony included the impact of social media on children, the impact of the legislation on websites other than social media, and ongoing litigation around this concept. The proposed bill is similar to a California law that was recently held unconstitutional.

UPCOMING WEBINARS ABOUT THE PAID LEAVE FOR ALL WORKERS ACT

The Illinois Department of Labor is hosting several webinars about the Paid Leave for All Workers Act, which will take effect January 1, 2024. IDOL's first webinar is set for October 3 and will provide an overview of the new law and answer compliance questions. IDOL will host an additional webinar October 19.

SUPREME COURT BIPA HEARING

Last week the Illinois Supreme Court heard oral arguments in two cases related to the state's Biometric Information Privacy Act. The cases, brought by nurses, allege that the hospitals they worked at, as well as the manufacturer of medicine cabinets with fingerprint technology, violated BIPA by requiring nurses to use fingerprint scanners to open medicine cabinets. The argument is that the hospitals did not obtain written releases prior to requiring the use of the fingerprint scanners; however, the hospitals claim they believed the use of biometrics to manage medicine falls under an exemption provided in BIPA for healthcare-related operations. Hospitals claim that they would be required to pay hundreds of millions of dollars if BIPA is applied to the healthcare industry.

LOCAL ELECTION AUTHORITIES TRY TO TAMP DOWN MISINFORMATION

Six months before the next presidential primary elections in Illinois, county clerks and other local election authorities are asking for the public's help in stopping misinformation campaigns before they get started. Officials from 25 Illinois counties scheduled a series of news conferences, where they said that accusations of vote tampering and other misinformation campaigns have proliferated in each of the last two presidential election cycles, and they fear it could get worse in 2024.

UAW STRIKE EXPANDS INTO ILLINOIS

The United Auto Workers has expanded its strike against the Big Three automakers to 38 locations at General Motors, Stellantis, and Ford. Among the facilities joining the strike in Illinois are a GM facility in Bolingbrook, a Stellantis facility in Naperville – there are about 100 workers at each facility -- and the Ford plant in Chicago, which has about 4,600 workers.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION WORK PERMIT EXPANSIONS

President **Joe Biden** and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will expand temporary protected status, including work permits, to thousands of recent Venezuelan asylum seekers in Illinois and across the country. At least 5,000 of the 14,000 asylum seekers in Chicago are from Venezuela, where they faced economic and political turmoil. Reducing wait times for employment approvals and expanding protection status for those coming from Venezuela will get people working.

CHICAGO SIGNS \$29.3 MILLION CONTRACT TO BUILD 'WINTERIZED BASE CAMPS' FOR MIGRANTS

The city of Chicago has signed a \$29.3 million contract with GardaWorld Federal Services LLC for migrant temporary housing. The contract mentions no specific sites for the base camps, nor a specific timetable for erecting the tent cities. Just this week, 27 more buses arrived in Chicago with asylum seekers – the most since they started arriving from Texas in August 2022. The city has now seen more than 15,000 migrants arrive.

SOS RECOMMENDS PERMANENT INCREASE TO DRIVING TEST AGE REQUIREMENT

The Illinois Secretary of State's office is recommending a pandemic-driven state law that raised the minimum age for required behind-the-wheel driving tests for license renewals from 75 to 79 be made permanent. The law raising the age was passed in 2021 and was set to expire October 1. A SOS study showed that the rate of

traffic crashes in Illinois in 2022 involving motorists age 75 and older was nearly identical to the year before, indicating that there is no reason for the state to return to the minimum age of 75 for mandatory road testing.

TROUBLING AUDIT FINDINGS REVEAL ISSUES FOR DCFS AND IDOC

A series of Illinois Auditor General reports reveal ongoing issues at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Illinois Department of Correction. DCFS's two-year compliance audit ending June 30, 2022 found 33 instances of the department not following procedures and requirements. Those issues include incomplete child welfare files, untimely initiation of child abuse and neglect investigation, and inadequate training programs, among other issues. A similar two-year DOC audit ending June 30, 2022 found 46 findings, including failure to notify victims and law enforcement when sex offenders were released from incarceration. It also found various inadequacies in data reporting and security.

ILLINOIS CLEAN ENERGY JOBS REPORT

The 2023 Clean Jobs Midwest Report showed that Illinois has about 125,000 clean energy jobs. Of those, nearly 14,000 people were employed in clean-vehicle jobs – such as electric vehicle makers Rivian in Normal and Lion Electric near Joliet -- according to Environmental Entrepreneurs, an economic and environmental advocacy group affiliated with the Natural Resources Defense Council. Illinois has the seventh-highest number of jobs in the clean-vehicle sector among all U.S. states. However, Illinois trails several of its Midwest neighbors, led by Michigan, which employed 32,271 people in clean-vehicle jobs, followed by Ohio and Indiana, with about 22,000 each.

DAY CARE CENTERS FACE FUNDING CRISIS

Pandemic-era federal funding that helped stabilize the childcare industry expired September 30, triggering a crisis for providers and the families who depend on them. For Illinois, that could mean nearly 130,000 kids without childcare, about 2,800 shuttered centers, and over 11,300 childcare providers without jobs, according to a study from the Century Foundation, a think tank headquartered in New York. The industry faced collapse as centers had to close due to COVID-19. In response, the federal government provided states \$24 billion to bolster the childcare sector through the American Rescue Plan in 2021.

SECURE CHOICE SMALL EMPLOYER DEADLINE APPROACHING

The Illinois Secure Choice Program requires employers to either provide a private retirement plan or sign up for Secure Choice, which helps employees save for retirement. To date, nearly 129,000 people are signed up. A new deadline is approaching -- employers with between 5 and 15 employees have until November 1 to sign up for Illinois Secure Choice or offer a private retirement plan. Eligible employers can register or request an exemption at www.ilsecurechoice.com.

IDPH WELCOMES CDC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RSV SHOTS

The Illinois Department of Public Health has endorsed the recommendation by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for the newly FDA-approved RSV vaccine that can be administered during weeks 32 to 36 of pregnancy to protect babies from the virus. This followed recommendations earlier this year for a preventive RSV treatment for infants up to 8 months and toddlers at high risk, and an RSV vaccine for people over 60. If the vaccine is received during pregnancy, infants will be protected and not need the preventive treatment after birth.

STATE ENDS TESTING OF FISH FOR PESTICIDES AFTER PERSISTENT LOW LEVELS FOUND

The state of Illinois will discontinue testing freshwater fish for organochlorine pesticides such as DDT after levels have diminished to nearly zero over the past 50 years. The pesticides were in widespread use in the 1940s but have been banned for agriculture use in the U.S. since 1972. The state has continued to test fish for organochlorine since 1974 because it can build up in the tissue of fish and other animals. Testing for other contaminants in fish, including methylmercury and polychlorinated biphenyls, will not be affected by these changes.

For more information on state legislative and public policy issues, please contact:

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