



ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report October 23, 2023

The Illinois General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene tomorrow for the first week of Fall Veto session (**October 24-26**) and return for the second week (**November 7-9**).

The two-week session is intended to act on legislation vetoed by the Governor during the summer. This year, the Governor **vetoed six pieces of legislation**. Lawmakers have three options with each bill. They can choose to accept the veto with a simple majority vote; override the veto with a 2/3 majority vote; or not act on the veto, which would kill the bill. An additional option is to pass new legislation to deal with the issue. The bills under review are:

- Energy Omnibus – [House Bill 3445](#) (Stadelman/Walsh) – Amendatory Veto removes a provision allowing Ameren to have a right of first refusal
- Procurement Legislation -- [HB 2878](#) (Castro/Hoffman) – Amendatory Veto removes authorization for public-private partnerships for local transportation projects
- Property Tax Legislation – [HB 2507](#) (Villanueva/Kifowit) – Amendatory Veto removes property tax break for certain nursing homes
- Removes moratorium on building nuclear power plants – [SB 76](#) (Rezin/Yednock)
- Halal Food in Schools – [HB 3643](#) (Villivalam/Rashid)
- Workplace Privacy Legislation – [Senate Bill 1515](#) (Cervantes/Delgado) **an amendment filed to [SB508](#) deals with this issue*

The General Assembly also uses Veto Session to pass necessary time-sensitive legislation. Both chambers have bills in position for potential consideration. This year, one major issue is whether to extend the **Invest in Kids Act**. Created in 2017, the act allows people to donate to private school scholarship funds and receive a state tax credit up to 75% of their donation. The state caps the program at \$75 million every year, but the act is set to sunset at the end of 2023. Currently, both chambers are negotiating an extension, but it is unclear if the proponents have the necessary votes to pass the legislation. Asked about the program's chances at an unrelated event last Thursday, Gov. **JB Pritzker** said that he would be willing to sign an extension of the program. In response Friday morning, the heads of the state's two largest teachers' unions issued a scathing statement accusing Gov. Pritzker of siding with "anti-public education Republican governors."

Another issue likely to come up during Veto Session is a change to the state's labor laws to allow certain **legislative staffers to unionize**. Last year, a group of employees in House Speaker **Emanuel 'Chris' Welch's** office formed the Illinois Legislative Staff Association to establish a union. Current state law, however, specifically exempts legislative staff from the categories of public employees who are allowed to unionize. In response, Speaker Welch introduced [HB 4148](#), which would eliminate the exemption for most legislative staff and allow them to unionize.

Additional state spending through a **supplemental appropriation bill** is unlikely to be on the agenda for Veto Session – which means the city of Chicago will not receive additional funds to help support some of the 18,500 migrants who have been bussed to Illinois in the past year.

Leader Kelly Burke Not Seeking Re-Election

State Rep. **Kelly Burke**, chair of the House Revenue Committee, has announced that she will not seek another term. Burke has been in the General Assembly for 14 years and helped lead efforts to increase leadership opportunities for women in the House Democratic caucus.

HFS Suspends Enrollment for Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services has announced that as the Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors program nears 16,500 individuals, a temporary pause on new enrollees will take effect November 6. The HBIS program provides Medicaid-like health care coverage to individuals aged 65 and older who would be eligible for Medicaid but for their immigration status. HFS also operates the Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults program, which provides similar coverage for individuals age 42-64. Through the end of September, nearly 69,000 individuals are covered across the HBIA and HBIS programs.

Pritzker Delivers Keynote at EV Policy Bootcamp

Gov. Pritzker delivered keynote remarks at the Electrification Coalition's Illinois Medium- and Heavy- Duty Electric Vehicle Policy Bootcamp in Chicago, where he highlighted the state's progress to increase the number of EVs on the road. According to the Governor's office, the number of EVs on the road has increased by 44% in 2023. Additionally, Pritzker's administration has awarded \$12.6 million for the installation of nearly 350 EV fast-charging stations around the state, launched a \$4,000 EV purchase rebate, and partnered with numerous industry partners to bring more EV-related business to the state.

State Offering Tax Relief to Individuals, Businesses Affected by Israel-Gaza Conflict

The state of Illinois will waive penalties and interest on income, withholding, sales, specialty, and excise taxes for certain entities affected by the conflict in Israel and Gaza if they cannot file returns or make timely payments. The waiver applies to returns and payments due between Oct. 7, 2023, and Oct 7, 2024. Eligible entities include individuals whose principal resident or businesses whose primary place of business is in Israel, the West Bank, or Gaza; any individual or business whose books, records, or tax preparer reside in those areas; anyone killed, injured, or taken hostage during the conflict; or any individual affiliated with a government or philanthropic organization assisting the area.

IDFPR Reaches Settlement with Payment Company over Mortgage Errors

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation and with 43 other state agencies have reached a multimillion settlement with payment company ACI Payments after an error in its electronic payment platform resulted in a total of \$2.3 billion in unintentional withdrawals from mortgage-holders. The company faced \$20 million in fines to various state regulators as a result of the error, which left individuals with mortgages serviced by Mr. Cooper (formerly Nationstar Mortgage LLC) with overdrafted bank accounts and/or insufficient funds after ACI's Speedpay service initiated withdrawals that were not scheduled or expected. In response to the error, Illinois Attorney General **Kwame Raoul** and other attorneys general and state regulators sought financial compensation and restitution from ACI Payments.

State Police Leverage Grant to Prevent Vehicle Theft, Hijacking

The Illinois State Police is using a \$10 million grant from the Illinois Secretary of State to bolster its enforcement efforts targeting vehicle theft, hijacking, and related violence. ISP stepped up enforcement during the third quarter of 2023. From July through September 2023, state police recovered 290 stolen/hijacked vehicles; made 24 stolen vehicle arrests; made 3 hijacked vehicle arrests; seized nine firearms as a result of stolen/hijacked vehicles recovered; launched 59 mission targeting stolen/hijacked vehicles and related violent crime; and dispatched 1,245 forensic laboratory assignments related to stolen/hijacked vehicles.

Local Elections Officials Discuss Security, Staffing in House Committee Hearing

Local election officials discussed the need for continued support for security and additional resources for election workers as part of a recent subject matter hearing in the House Ethics and Elections Committee. Lawmakers heard testimony from representatives from the Illinois State Board of Elections, the Chicago Board of Elections, the Rockford Board of Elections, the Illinois Association of County Clerks and Recorders, and the Tazewell County Clerk's office.

AG: Medicaid Fraud Case Ends in Prison Time

A Cook County judge has sentenced the owner of a medical equipment company and the company's biller to six years in prison after ruling they defrauded more than \$100,000 in Medicaid funds from the state. The Illinois Attorney General's office led the prosecution of **Doreatha Thomas** and **Siobahan Booker** of Olympia Fields, who were accused of using Integrity Medical & Physician Supplies, a medical equipment company, to submit fraudulent Medicaid claims to the state for diabetic supplies that were never provided. In total, Thomas and Booker defrauded the Illinois Medicaid program out of nearly \$685,000.

Secretary of State Extends Parental Leave for Employees

Illinois Secretary of State **Alexi Giannoulias** has signed an executive order expanding his office's paid parental leave policy from four weeks to 12 weeks, which will apply to all of the approximately 4,100 employees. Under the new policy, employees will be able to use their time off intermittently in five-day increments for one year after either adopting or giving birth to a child. The policy applies to both the birth and non-birthing parent. Previously, non-birthing parents were given only two weeks off.

Navigator Cancels CO2 Pipeline

A BlackRock-backed plan to build a 1,350-mile carbon dioxide pipeline spanning five Midwestern states, including Illinois, has been formally cancelled 10 days after withdrawing its application from the Illinois Commerce Commission. Navigator said at the time that it had planned to refile with a new route, but those plans appear to be thwarted.

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

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