

ICCTA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC POLICY UPDATE

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Conversations about Speaker Madigan dominated this past week. A few months ago, federal prosecutors and ComEd entered into a deferred prosecution agreement to resolve a criminal investigation into a years-long bribery scheme concerning historical lobbying practices. Under the DPA, ComEd agreed to pay a \$200 million fine due to charges of arranging jobs, vendor subcontracts, and monetary payments associated with those jobs and subcontracts for various associates of “Public Official A” (identified as House Speaker Michael Madigan). The Department of Justice alleges the purpose of those bribes was to influence and reward the Speaker’s efforts to assist ComEd with their legislation.

The DPA led to last week’s [indictments](#) of Mike McClain, a former State Representative turned lobbyist and close confidante of the Speaker, former ComEd CEO Anne Pramaggiore, and two other lobbyists - John Hooker and Jay Doherty - for their role in the ComEd bribery scheme. All four have inner-circle ties to the Speaker. Federal prosecutors have not yet charged the Speaker with any wrongdoing, though their sights are clearly set on Madigan. However, the morning after the indictments, Madigan released a nearly [1,000-word statement](#) denying awareness of any bribery attempt or any wrongdoing. The statement did nothing to dissuade now 18 members of the House Democrat caucus to call for a new Speaker. Representatives who have publicly stated their desire for new leadership include in the following:

Jonathan Carroll
Kelly Cassidy
Deb Conroy
Margaret Croke
Daniel Didech
Eva-Dina Delgado

Robyn Gabel
Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz
Will Guzzardi
Terra Costa Howard
Stephanie Kifowit
Lindsey LaPointe

Anna Moeller
Bob Morgan
Anne Stava-Murray
Maurice West
Ann Williams
Sam Yingling

The House Democrats will have 73 seats in January for the 102nd General Assembly. That means at least 14 are needed to deprive Madigan of the 60 he must have for reelection. Currently, there are four more members than the opposition needed to prevent Madigan from obtaining 60 votes – and more are expected to step forward. The Speaker was calling the members of his caucus to ask if they support him. Late Friday, Speaker Madigan refused to drop out of the race for Speaker and released the following statement: “The decision on the next speaker of the Illinois House will be made at a caucus, after a full discussion of the issues facing our state and the qualifications of the candidates. I plan to be a candidate for speaker, and today I confirmed that I continue to have support from a **significant** number of House Democratic caucus members.” Emphasis added – “significant” isn’t 60.

If not Madigan, who can get 60 Democratic votes to become speaker? Rep. Stephanie Kifowit, chairperson of the State Government Administration committee, has already put her hat in the ring. Other names: Majority Leader Greg Harris, Assistant Majority Leader Kelly Burke, Appropriations-Public Safety Chair Kelly Cassidy, Assistant Majority Leader Will Davis, Deputy Majority Leader Jehan Gordon-Booth, Assistant Majority

Leader Jay Hoffman, Executive Committee Chair Emanuel “Chris” Welch, and Energy and Environment Chair Ann Williams.

House Republican Leader Jim Durkin held a press conference yesterday complaining Democrats were “stalling” the efforts of the House Special Investigative Committee tasked with investigating the Speaker’s actions in the ComEd bribery scandal. Durkin said if Madigan won’t resign on his own, the committee needs to meet again. The three Democrats on the committee issued a statement saying the GOP was trying to “rush things along.” Chair of the committee, Rep. Emanuel “Chris” Welch, says the committee is still waiting on documents before it can meet.

Governor JB Pritzker addressed the indictment and Madigan’s statement during his daily coronavirus briefing: “If Speaker Madigan wants to continue in a position of enormous public trust with such a serious ethical cloud hanging over his head, then he has to at the very least, be willing to stand in front of the press and the people and answer every last question to their satisfaction.” Written statements, Pritzker said, “are not going to cut it. If the speaker cannot commit to that level of transparency, then the time has come for him to resign as speaker.”

Election Update

All the votes have now been counted. The State Board of Elections will certify the results by December 4. The Senate increased its Democrat supermajority by one – 41 Dem, 18 GOP – adding Karina Villa (D) to the caucus after she won the seat vacated by Senator Jim Oberweis to run for Congress. Oberweis ultimately lost the 14th congressional district to incumbent Rep. Lauren Underwood (D) by more than 5,000 votes. In a statement, Oberweis stated he is pursuing a “discovery recount” in an effort to “be certain the final vote count is correct.”

In the House, late vote counting recently resulted in a defeat for GOP Rep. John Cabello. House Republicans ended the election cycle with a net gain of one seat. Other GOP Reps defeated include Grant Wehrli and Allen Skillicorn. Defeated Democrat Reps include Nathan Reitz, Monica Bristow, Mary Edly-Allen, and Diane Pappas. Democrats hold on to supermajority status with 73 Democrats and 45 Republicans (71 votes is a supermajority).

Governor’s Office of Management and Budget Released Five-Year Forecast

Governor JB Pritzker’s Office of Management and Budget (GOMB) has released their [Illinois Economic and Fiscal Policy Report](#), showing a \$3.9 billion deficit this fiscal year. The report goes on to outline the long-term economic and fiscal policy objectives of the state, along with economic and fiscal policy intentions for the upcoming state fiscal year and for the subsequent four fiscal years. [More information about the November 13 report is in the Governor’s press release.](#)

Chicago Budget

In the City of Chicago, Mayor Lori Lightfoot’s proposed \$94 million property tax increase was approved by the Finance Committee, a prerequisite before she presents the budget plan to the full City Council. Lightfoot says the tax increase is necessary to close a \$1.2 billion budget deficit. The budget also includes plans to spend \$3.7 billion over five years on infrastructure projects. The city would borrow \$1.4 billion to fund the projects over the next two years, with additional borrowing to come.

COVID-19 Update

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today reported 8,322 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Illinois, including 47 additional deaths. Within the past 24 hours, laboratories reported 91,562 specimens for a total 9,892,981. As of last night, 6,171 in Illinois were reported to be in the hospital with COVID-19. Of those, 1,206 patients were in the ICU and 635 patients with COVID-19 were on ventilators. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from November 16 – November 22, 2020 is 10.9%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from November 16 – November 22, 2020 is 12.7%. All but one of Illinois' 102 counties are at warning level.

All information pertaining to the Coronavirus Response from the Governor's office and agencies can be found [here](#). DCEO regularly updates its [Frequently Asked Questions document \(available via this link\)](#).

Governor Pritzker moved the whole state to [Tier 3 mitigations](#) of the recovery plan this week for an indefinite time. Beginning Friday, there is limited capacity at retail, personal care services, fitness clubs, and other businesses. Casinos, museums, and theaters must close. Indoor sports and recreational activities are prohibited. The governor warned another stay-at-home order could be issued if COVID cases do not begin declining. Pritzker reported COVID-19 is now the third-largest cause of death in Illinois with the last seven-day death rate per 100,000 residents at 1.2 percent in rural areas, .5 percent in metro areas.

Seven governors in the Midwest joined to urge residents to stay home this Thanksgiving and gather with family via Zoom. Governor Pritzker joined his colleagues from Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana, Minnesota, and Kentucky in the joint plea.

The Illinois Federation of Teachers union is asking Governor Pritzker to close schools across the state and set thresholds for school districts to decide on opening school buildings. The Governor's latest mitigations still allow local school districts to decide on attendance.

Secretary of State Jesse White has closed Driver Services facilities statewide until December 7.

The statewide unemployment rate fell to 6.8 percent in October, down 3.6 percentage points.

IDPH Published Vaccination Distribution Plan

IDPH has published their [COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Planning Guide](#). The guide is designed to provide a plan for the distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available.

IDOT Created New Communication Tool

IDOT announced the launch of *Telegram*, an e-newsletter to inform the public about agency projects, programs, and activities impacting communities, across the state. To subscribe to *Telegram*, visit [IDOT's in Motion website](#) and sign up for the "General Interest" option or other areas of interest to you. Once subscribed, you will start receiving biweekly email dispatches that include information on: upcoming IDOT projects and safety improvements; planning and programming efforts; snow and ice response; employment opportunities with IDOT; and, opportunities to partner with IDOT and other transportation agencies.

HFS Announced Equity-Centric Healthcare Transformation Plan

Building on Governor Pritzker’s renewal of the Hospital Assessment Program earlier this year, the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services (HFS) unveiled a new equity-centric healthcare plan that addresses social and structural determinants of health. HFS partnered with the University of Illinois at Chicago’s School of Public Health and community organizations to create the plan which presents a major shift in providing healthcare delivery. If implemented [the proposed plan](#) will fund pilot projects and planning grants to address both healthcare and social determinants of health, emphasize collaboration with community-based organizations plus one unrelated healthcare provider, and ensure that health equity is a measurable, primary focus of each project. Pending feedback and input from the General Assembly, the proposed funding mix would begin with an annual pool of \$150 million to start a realignment of state resources.

Pritzker Announced \$750,000 Investment to Expand High-Speed Internet

Governor Pritzker and DCEO announced a new Digital Equity Package to address gaps in digital access, adoption, and affordability for high-speed internet access. The comprehensive approach is designed to help communities identify and address existing broadband equity gaps, as well as to leverage new and existing sources of funding for long-term broadband equity. New plans to spearhead digital equity for Illinois build on Governor Pritzker’s bold Connect Illinois program, a \$420 million investment to bring universal access throughout the state by 2024. For more information, [view the DCEO press release](#).

Funding for Discovery Partners Institutes and Illinois Innovation Network

Governor Pritzker released \$142 million to launch new facilities for the Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Innovation Network, created to accelerate job creation and economic growth through education, research, and discovery. The funding comes from the Rebuild Illinois program and matching state grants with university, private, and philanthropic sources. This round of funding supports DPI’s headquarters in Chicago and IIN facilities at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, University of Illinois Chicago, Chicago State University, Eastern Illinois University, and Governors State University.

Regulatory Update

Numerous Executive Orders and emergency rules have been issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Executive Orders from the Governor can be accessed at <https://www2.illinois.gov/government/executive-orders>. Due to a resurgence of COVID-19 cases in the Springfield area, the **JCAR meeting scheduled for November 17 was cancelled**. Agencies with proposed rulemakings on the November agenda will be free to adopt them after the Second Notice periods for those rulemakings have expired. The next JCAR meeting is scheduled for December 15 in Springfield.

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