

ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

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It's the final stretch. The economy, crime, and abortion are all in play as issues that might drive voters to the polls on November 8. Democrats are banking that the U.S. Supreme Court's overturning of *Roe v. Wade* will spur more women to vote. With two state Supreme Court seats up for grabs, Illinois could see a shift on the high court to a Republican majority. While Democrats were seeing sizable margins on their side in the last few months, as Election Day gets closer, several races appear to be tightening as the lagging economy seems to be boosting Republicans. Election Day could end up as a nail biter in some unpredictable places. Late polling seems to indicate James Carville's phrase from the 1990s – "It's the economy, stupid" – has aged well, three decades later.

Initially, early voting was lagging; but in recent weeks, vote totals have been rising. According to the Illinois State Board of Elections, over 1 million Illinoisans have already voted. Nearly 870,000 vote-by-mail ballots were requested for the General Election, and about 520,000 of those ballots have been returned; more than 535,000 people have voted early at their voting center.

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- **Veto Session:** The Fall 2022 Veto Session is scheduled for **November 15-17 and November 29-December 1.**
- **Lame Duck Session:** Members have been advised to be prepared to meet in Springfield on **January 4-10, 2023.**

ILLINOIS GENERAL ELECTION UPDATES

- ❖ The top **Illinois Senate** races to watch:
 - 19th – Sen. Mike Hastings (D) versus Patrick Sheehan (R)
 - 23rd – Sen. Suzy Glowiak-Hilton (D) versus former Rep. Dennis Reboletti (R)
 - 36th – Rep. Mike Halpin (D) versus Mike Thoms (R)
 - 48th – Sen. Doris Turner (D) versus Rep. Sandy Hamilton (R)
 - 56th – Sen. Kris Tharp (D) versus Erica Conway-Harriss (R)
- ❖ The top **Illinois House** races to watch:
 - 45th – Rep. Deanne Mazzochi (R) versus Jen Ladisch Douglass (D)
 - 51st – Rep. Chris Bos (R) versus Nabeela Syed (D)
 - 53rd – Rep. Mark Walker (D) versus Jack Vrett (R)
 - 66th – Rep. Suzanne Ness (D) versus Connie Cain (R)
 - 83rd – Rep. Keith Wheeler (R) versus Matt Hanson (D)
 - 104th – Rep. Mike Marron (R) versus Cynthia Cunningham (D)
 - 112nd – Rep. Katie Stuart (D) versus Jennifer Korte (R)

ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES SEE SYSTEMWIDE ENROLLMENT INCREASE

For the first time since 2009, the Illinois community college system recorded fall-to-fall enrollment growth. Statewide, fall 2022 enrollments increased in both headcount (+1.5 percent) and full-time equivalent (+0.3 percent) from the previous year, according to the Illinois Community College Board's

Fall 2022 Enrollment Report. This 1.5 percent increase is well above the national average, which declined by 5.6 percent in 2021 and remained flat in 2022. The full report is accessible [HERE](#).

2022 SCHOOL REPORT CARD DATA SHOW GRADUATION RATE IMPROVEMENT

Illinois high schools graduated the most students they have in a decade, according to data released in the 2022 Illinois Report Card. The state's graduation rate, 87.3 percent, is the highest in 12 years, driven by consistent increases in Black and Hispanic student graduation rates every year since 2018. In addition to record graduation rates, the 2022 school year showed average student growth in the 54th percentile in language arts and the 52nd percentile in math, compared to 2021's 38th percentile and 2019's 50th percentile in both language arts and math. The Illinois State Board of Education also announced that Illinois has defied national trends of growing teacher shortages, adding 2,500 last year, including 500 Black and Hispanic teachers. ISBE's full 2021-2022 school year report card data can be found [HERE](#).

AP EXAM TAKERS RANKS 5TH IN NATION, BACK TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

The number of Illinois students taking Advance Placement (AP) exams has rebounded from the pandemic, leading Illinois to rank 5th in the nation in exam takers, according to the Illinois State Board of Education. The state saw 7.2 percent more students taking AP exams in 2022 compared to 2021. Additionally, 72,000 students received a 3 or higher on those exams, 18.5 percent more than in 2021.

PRITZKER ADMINISTRATION AWARDS \$8.6 MILLION FOR SOUTH CENTRAL ILLINOIS TRAINING & INNOVATION CENTER

This state grant will be used to redevelop a warehouse in the city of Litchfield's Industrial Park and will create a regional training center, providing Career and Technical Training (CTE) for school districts in Montgomery & Macoupin counties, as well as displaced workers in the region. In partnership with Lincoln Land Community College and Lewis and Clark Community College, students will have the opportunity to earn college credits and industry credentials while still in high school – helping them meet the needs of regional workforce demands while preparing them for postsecondary success. The Center will offer training in auto technology, welding, as well as an Illinois Laborers' and Contractors apprenticeship program focused on the trades. The warehouse will be retrofitted to offer state-of-the-art facilities including a full-scale auto garage, welding center, and separate modules different areas within the trades – all designed for hands-on learning designed to meet the demands of the workforce, including Precision Machining, IT Certifications, & Agriculture Technology.

CLEAN ENERGY JOBS

Jobs in clean energy grew by 5,000 in Illinois last year, mostly in electric vehicle and solar energy sectors. Overall, employment in clean energy grew by 5 percent statewide, employing more than 120,000 Illinoisans and leading the Midwest in clean energy jobs.

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

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