

ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

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New Leadership in the Illinois House

State Rep. Emanuel “Chris” Welch, the new speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, has promised to make some changes to the way the Speaker’s office operates. For one, Welch is adept at using social media and has committed to modernizing the office. He has also committed to ethics reforms and supports a law limiting leader terms to 10 years. One of the biggest areas for change is the upcoming legislative and congressional district reapportionment. Under former Speaker Michael Madigan, the process was partisan and handled behind closed doors. Governor JB Pritzker has promised not to sign an “unfair” map. Welch has been a supporter of “fair” maps in the past but acknowledged that his version of “fair” might not be the same as others.

Welch’s first order of business is to announce the rules of the Illinois House. Welch has made it clear he wants more of a collaborative approach by conferring with his colleagues on both sides of the aisle. He also promised a leadership team that will show the state’s diversity of gender, race, and geography. Welch’s leadership team includes:

- State Rep. Greg Harris - Majority Leader
- State Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth - Deputy Majority Leader / Speaker Pro-Tempore
- State Rep. Mary E. Flowers - Deputy Majority Leader and Dean of the Caucus
- State Rep. Jaime M. Andrade, Jr. - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Robyn Gabel - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Elizabeth Hernandez - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Jay Hoffman - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Natalie Manley - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Marcus C. Evans, Jr. - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Delia Ramirez - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Carol Ammons - Democratic Conference Chair

In addition to these leadership posts, Welch tapped leaders within each caucus of the House Democrats to serve as caucus whips. These members will rally the various caucuses around legislation and issues of importance to the entire Democratic Caucus. This team will be:

- State Rep. Will Guzzardi - Progressive Caucus Whip
- State Rep. Kam Buckner - Black Caucus Whip
- State Rep. Theresa Mah - Asian Caucus Whip
- State Rep. Larry Walsh, Jr. - Downstate Caucus Whip
- State Rep. Deb Conroy - Women’s Caucus Whip
- State Rep. Aaron Ortiz - Latinx Caucus Whip

Four representatives who held leadership positions under former Speaker Madigan are out: Kelly Burke, who plans to run for mayor of Evergreen Park; Will Davis and Fred Crespo, who weren’t elected out of the Black and Latino caucuses to serve in leadership, and Kathleen Willis. Representatives moving up are Jaime Andrade, Delia Ramirez, Marcus Evans Jr., Robyn Gabel, and Carol Ammons.

Madigan is expected to resign from the 22nd District House seat he’s held since 1971. He has offered some simple advice to Welch: “trust his instinct.” In addition to packing up his office, multiple sources report that Madigan has already moved some of his personal belongings out of his longtime Springfield apartment – fueling the expectation

he could resign. It is still unknown if Madigan will keep his role as state chair of the Democratic Party of Illinois, but Welch has said he is not interested in the role if it opens.

COVID at the Capitol/BOS Center

Some lawmakers, their staffs, and political reporters will be quarantining for two weeks upon leaving Springfield as there have been multiple reports of post-session positive Covid-19 cases. Certain individuals in the Senate complex have been advised to quarantine, and anyone at the Bank of Springfield Center on Thursday, the first day of the 102nd Illinois General Assembly, has been advised to do the same, according to a statement that a positive Covid-19 case has been reported in both locations.

Update on the Illinois Senate

The Illinois Senate has adopted its operating rules for the 102nd General Assembly. A new rule will allow a bill to be considered before multiple committees. While it's unclear how this provision will function during the legislative process at this time, according to the new rule, a bill must pass all committees to which it is assigned to advance to the floor for final action.

The Senate also created several new standing committees, while eliminating others. New committees include a combined Appropriations Committee; Behavioral and Mental Health; Ethics (Formerly Government Accountability and Ethics); Commerce (formerly Commerce and Economic Development); Health; Healthcare Access and Availability; Human Rights; Public Safety; Redistricting; and Tourism and Hospitality. Committees eliminated include: Appropriations I and Appropriations II, Human Services, Public Health, and Telecommunications and Information Technology. The single Appropriation Committee is expected to create 12 subject-area subcommittees.

President Harmon also announced his Senate Democrat Leadership Team:

- State Sen. Kimberly Lightford – Majority Leader
- State Sen. Bill Cunningham – President Pro Tempore
- State Sen. Emil Jones, III – Deputy Majority Leader
- State Sen. Laura Murphy – Deputy Majority Leader
- State Sen. Jacqueline Collins – Assistant Majority Leader
- State Sen. Linda Holmes – Assistant Majority Leader
- State Sen. David Koehler – Assistant Majority Leader
- State Sen. Antonio Munoz – Assistant Majority Leader
- State Sen. Mattie Hunter – Majority Caucus Chair
- State Sen. Omar Aquino – Majority Caucus Whip
- State Sen. Napoleon Harris, III – Majority Caucus Whip
- State Sen. Michael Hastings – Majority Caucus Whip
- State Sen. Julie Morrison – Majority Caucus Whip

Senate Committee Chairs for the 102nd General Assembly:

<u>Senate Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>
Agriculture	Senator Patrick Joyce
Appropriations	Senator Elgie Sims Jr.
Assignments	Senator Kimberly A. Lightford
Behavioral and Mental Health	Senator Laura Fine
Commerce	Senator Suzy Glowiak Hilton
Criminal Law	Senator John Connor

Education	Senator Christopher Belt
Energy and Public Utilities	Senator Michael E. Hastings
Environment and Conservation	Senator Melinda Bush
Ethics	Senator Ann Gillespie
Executive Appointments	Senator Laura Murphy
Executive	Senator Cristina Castro
Financial Institutions	Senator Laura Ellman
Health	Senator Julie Morrison
Healthcare Access and Availability	Senator Patricia Van Pelt
Higher Education	Senator Scott M. Bennett
Human Rights	Senator Celina Villanueva
Insurance	Senator Napoleon Harris, III
Judiciary	Senator Rachelle Crowe
Labor	Senator Linda Holmes
Licensed Activities	Senator Emil Jones, III
Local Government	Senator Steve Stadelman
Pensions	Senator Robert F. Martwick
Public Safety	Senator Robert Peters
Redistricting	Senator Omar Aquino
Revenue	Senator Heather A. Steans**
State Government	Senator Steven M. Landek
Tourism and Hospitality	Senator Sara Feigenholtz
Transportation	Senator Ram Villivalam
Veterans Affairs	Senator Thomas Cullerton

**This list is already out of date. Sen. Heather Steans, who has served in the legislature since 2008, has announced her resignation, which will take effect at the end of this month. State Rep. Kelly Cassidy is interested in being appointed to fill that Senate vacancy. Appointments to fill the vacancies of former Sen. Andy Manar and former Minority Leader Bill Brady remain unfilled, although Brady's replacement could be selected as early as this week.

The Senate was currently scheduled to return to Springfield on January 26, but it has already cancelled session, citing the challenges of legislating in the midst of a pandemic. The House is still scheduled to return on February 2. It is likely session days will continue to be canceled due to the pandemic, particularly in light of the announced COVID-19 positive cases at the BOS Center and the Capitol Complex. Senate President Don Harmon said in a statement: "Much of the early part of any legislative session is devoted to organizational efforts and committee hearings. The Senate's remote committee rules mean we could manage to accomplish much of this remotely while working our way through the vaccine protocols like everyone else."

Key Session Dates

Below is a listing of key dates for the 2021 spring session. The Governor's traditional State of the State Address has been combined with the Budget Address, which will be delivered on February 17.

2021 Key Session Dates:

- January 29 - House Legislative Reference Bureau Request Deadline
- February 5 - Senate Legislative Reference Bureau Request Deadline
- February 11 - Deadline: Introduction of Substantive House Bills
- February 17 - Governor's State of the State/Budget Address
- February 19 - Deadline: Introduction of Substantive Senate Bills

February 23 - Consolidated Primary Election
March 26 - Deadline: Substantive Bills out of Committee - Both Chambers
March 29 - April 9 Spring Break
April 6 - Consolidated Election
April 23 - Deadline: Third Reading Substantive Bills - Both Chambers
May 14 - Deadline: Substantive Bills out of Committee in Opposite Chamber - Both Chambers
May 28 - Deadline: Third Reading Substantive Bills - Both Chambers
May 31 - Adjournment

Although Illinois lawmakers sent 23 bills to the Governor during lame duck session, several other proposals failed to clear both chambers. Many of the proposals are likely to be reconsidered in the new General Assembly. For example, Representative Lilly has already introduced the Black Caucus healthcare agenda in the form of [HB 158](#) and [HB 159](#). Healthcare was the only Black Caucus pillar not to be approved.

With the 102nd General Assembly upon us, new bill introductions have begun, and legislators and advocacy groups are establishing their legislative agendas for the 2021 spring session.

State Budget

President Joe Biden's nearly \$2 trillion pandemic relief proposal includes more stimulus checks and help for the unemployed, as well as \$350 billion for cities and states whose budgets have been pummeled by the loss of tax revenue. Gov. Pritzker is hopeful the stimulus package will pass. He also claims to have a commitment from Illinois' legislative leaders to take up his "decoupling" bill in the regular session. Shoring up the budget hole in the current fiscal year remains a priority.

COVID-19 Update & Regional Metrics

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported 7,042 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease in Illinois last Friday, including 95 additional deaths. Currently, IDPH is reporting a total of 1,093,375 cases, including 18,615 deaths. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from January 15–21 is 5.0%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from January 15–21 is 6.2%.

Last Friday IDPH began adjusting the reporting of probable cases, which caused an artificial one-day increase in cases of 1,903. That count now includes both confirmed and probable cases. Confirmed deaths and probable deaths will still be reported separately.

Last fall, the positivity rate peaked at 13.2 percent on a rolling average as of Nov. 13, and the entire state entered strict Tier 3 mitigations on Nov. 20. Since then, the positivity rate has been on a continual downward trend except for the two weeks following Christmas day, when it rose from just under 7 percent to over 8.5 percent before beginning to fall again.

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

IDPH and the Chicago Department of Public Health have announced the state's first case of the SARS-CoV-2 variant B.1.1.7 first identified in the United Kingdom.

Last Friday, Gov. Pritzker unfroze all of Illinois' 11 regions from the Tier 3 coronavirus mitigations implemented statewide in November as the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic raged. The Governor also announced

adjustments to the resurgence mitigations in light of ramped-up vaccination efforts across the state and increased hospital staffing, with Tier 1 of the resurgence mitigation plan now allowing restaurants and bars in a qualifying region to resume indoor dining with limited capacity. Youth and recreational sports may also resume play following the IDPH All Sports Policy for all regions moving out of Tier 3.

1. Region 1 (North-West): Tier 1 mitigations
2. Region 2 (North-Central): Tier 1 mitigations
3. Region 3 (West-Central): Phase 4
4. Region 4 (Metro East): Tier 2 mitigations
5. Region 5 (Southern): Phase 4
6. Region 6 (East-Central): Phase 4
7. Region 7 (South Suburban – Kankakee & Will): Tier 1 mitigations
8. Region 8 (West Suburban – DuPage & Kane): Tier 2 mitigations
9. Region 9 (North Suburban – Lake & McHenry): Tier 2 mitigations
10. Region 10 (Suburban Cook): Tier 2 mitigations
11. Region 11 (Chicago): Tier 2 mitigations

* If metrics continue to improve or are stable, regions 10 and 11 are on track to advance to [Tier 1](#) on Saturday, January 23, 2021.

In order to move to **Tier 2** mitigations, a region must meet the following metrics:

1. A test positivity rate below 12 percent for three consecutive days, as measured by the 7-day rolling average; AND
2. Greater than or equal to 20 percent available staffed ICU and medical/surgical hospital beds for three consecutive days, on a 3-day rolling average; AND
3. A sustained decrease in the number of people in the hospital with COVID-19 for seven out of 10 days, on a 7-day average.

In order to move to **Tier 1** mitigations, a region must meet the following metrics:

1. A test positivity rate below 8 percent for three consecutive days, as measured by the 7-day rolling average; AND
2. Greater than or equal to 20 percent available staffed ICU and medical/surgical hospital beds for three consecutive days, on a 3-day rolling average; AND
3. No sustained increase in the number of people in the hospital with COVID-19 for seven out of 10 days, on a 7-day average.

In order to move to **Phase 4**, a region must meet the following metrics:

1. A test positivity rate less than or equal to 6.5 percent for three consecutive days, as measured by the 7-day rolling average; AND
2. Greater than or equal to 20 percent available staffed ICU and medical/surgical hospital beds for three consecutive days, on a 3-day rolling average; AND
3. No sustained increase in the number of people in the hospital with COVID-19 for seven out of 10 days, on a 7-day average.

The key change to the state's Restore Illinois Mitigation Plan is resuming indoor dining with capacity limits in Tier 1. Restaurants and bars in Regions in Tier 1 can open indoor dining, with capacity limited to the lesser of 25 people or 25 percent of room capacity. Additionally, establishments must serve food, and indoor tables must be limited to no more than four people, with reservations limited to two hours. Outdoor dining regulations across the [resurgence plan](#) and Phase 4 remain unchanged.

Below are four documents provided by the Governor's Office.

- [Tier 2 Resurgence Mitigation 1 Pager](#)
- [Tier 1 Resurgence Mitigation 1 Pager](#)
- [Sports Guidance](#)
- [IL Vaccine Administration Plan](#)

Additionally, the following IDPH webpage <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=1> provides daily updates on key regional metrics.

COVID-19 VACCINES

In accordance with local progress, IDPH has permitted local health departments who have already substantially vaccinated their 1A populations to move forward with 1B in order to leave no vaccine on the shelves. While vaccine shipments from the federal government remains limited, the state is aggressively building out its capacity. Hundreds of public vaccination sites opened across the state this week. In addition to local health department clinics, vaccines may be available at retail pharmacy chains, Illinois National Guard mobile sites, state-run mass vaccination clinics, hospitals and urgent care locations, doctors' offices, and large employers. Phase 1B will begin statewide with limited distribution today (January 25), though some areas of the state which have "substantially" completed the first phase have already started with Phase 1B.

As of last night, 922,325 doses of vaccine have been delivered to providers in Illinois, including Chicago. In addition, approximately 524,050 doses have been allocated to the federal government's Pharmacy Partnership Program for long-term care facilities. This brings the total Illinois doses to 1,446,375. IDPH is currently reporting a total of 616,677 vaccines administered, including 93,683 for long-term care facilities. The 7-day rolling average of vaccines administered daily is 24,190 doses.

One issue during the first phase of vaccinations has been that health systems could only vaccinate health care workers. If they couldn't inoculate enough health care workers quickly, they didn't want to hold on to doses that others might be able to use. As a result, a number of Chicago-area hospital systems have declined offers of additional vaccine shipments in recent weeks. For example, NorthShore University HealthSystem, which has six hospitals in Chicago and the suburbs, said "no thanks" to a batch of doses earlier this month because it was busy administering second doses to employees.

Another challenge in the first phase was that many people were hesitant to get the vaccine — an issue that's likely to carry over to the next phase.

Illinois National Guard Activated to Springfield and Washington, D.C.

Two weeks, Gov. Pritzker activated 250 members of the Illinois National Guard in response to the warnings issued by the FBI regarding threats to state capital cities in the days leading up to the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden. Our state public safety agencies, including the Illinois State Police, Secretary of State Police, and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, worked in tandem with their local and federal counterparts to protect the residents of Illinois while safeguarding the right to peaceful protest. At the request of the U.S. Department of Defense, the Governor also activated an additional 100 members of the Illinois National Guard in support of the 59th Presidential Inauguration in Washington D.C. These additional troops joined the approximately 200 members of the Guard that were previously activated by the Governor.

Only a handful of protesters appeared in Springfield.

IBHE Approves Higher Education Budget Request Focused on Equity

The Illinois Board of Higher Education has approved a Fiscal Year 2022 budget that increases funding to support its continuing efforts to help close equity gaps in higher education outcomes. The budget proposal is \$2.141 billion and would reflect a 4.5 percent (\$92 million) increase for general funds, excluding the State University Retirement System. The budget recommendation next goes to Gov. Pritzker and the General Assembly for consideration.

Budget highlights that focus on equity include:

- \$50 million increase for MAP
- \$5.3 million (2 percent) increase for community colleges
- \$23.2 million (2 percent) increase for public universities
- \$1 million for roll-out of the Common App
- Maintained funding for AIM HIGH, which is a merit-based scholarship program for public universities
- \$10 million toward financial stability for College Illinois!

Gaming Operations Resume

Casino gambling and video gaming licensees in regions that exited Tier 3 Resurgence Mitigations on January 15 were allowed to resume operations beginning at 8 AM on Saturday, January 16. They continue to be subject to [Tier 1 and Tier 2 Mitigations](#).

IDNR to Reopen Select Historic Sites

Last Friday the Illinois Department of Natural Resources announced that select state historic sites will reopen to the public effective Tuesday, Jan. 26. All sites open to the public will return to staffing levels prior to their closure. Sites in regions 4 and 7 of the Restore Illinois plan will remain closed until further notice.

Illinois Community College Trustees Association

401 E. Capitol Avenue, Suite 200

Springfield, IL 62701

217-528-2858

www.communitycolleges.org

