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## ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report February 13, 2023

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*The House and Senate both convened briefly in Springfield last week. Most of the focus has been on drafting and filing legislation. Nearly 2,500 bills were filed by the Friday, February 10 filing deadline in the Senate. About 2,300 bills have been filed in the House, with many more expected before the Friday, February 17 deadline. Each caucus is working on bill review and assigning bills to committee. Please review [ICCTA's Bill List](#) and alert us about any concerns – or of any bills you wish to support.*

*Both chambers return to Springfield for a Tuesday–Thursday session. Committee work will begin in earnest this week. Gov. JB Pritzker will propose his 5th annual state budget to lawmakers on Wednesday, February 15. This proposal will provide the framework for the budget to be passed by lawmakers in May and is the beginning of a monthslong negotiating process.*

**\*\*\*Please review [ICCTA's BILL LIST](#).\*\*\***

**It is vital that we know your positions so that legislation does not slip through unopposed.\*\*\***

### KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103<sup>RD</sup> ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- February 15: Governor's State of the State / Budget Address
- February 17: Deadline – Introduction of House Bills in the House
- February 28: Consolidated primary election
- March 10: Deadline – Senate bills out of Senate committee / House bills out of House committee
- March 24: Deadline – Third Reading of House bills in the House
- March 31: Deadline – Third Reading of Senate bills in the Senate
- April 4: Consolidated Election (including community college trustee elections)
- April 28: Deadline – House bills out of Senate committee / Senate bills out of House committee
- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

### DURKIN, BENNETT HOUSE REPLACEMENTS NAMED

New Republican appointees were named for the vacancies recently left by former House Republican Leader **Jim Durkin**, who resigned in January, and former Rep. **Tom Bennett**, who was appointed to a vacancy in the Illinois Senate.

Lemont mayor **John Egofske** will replace Durkin in the 82nd District. He is a Certified Public Accountant who helped reform municipal finances in Lemont and improve bond ratings. Egofske will continue to serve as mayor of Lemont.

Livingston County board member **Jason Bunting** was sworn in as Bennett's replacement. Bunting works as a family farmer. Until 2023, he served as president of the Livingston County Farm Bureau and is a director for the Illinois Corn Growers' Association.

### **SENATE ANNOUNCED BIPARTISAN COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

Two committees in the Illinois General Assembly will have bipartisan co-chairs. One privilege of being the majority party is chairing all committees. This session, the Senate State Government Committee and the Senate Higher Education Committee will have Republican co-chairs. Joining the Senate Higher Education Committee with Sen. **Michael Halpin** (D-Rock Island) is Sen. **Dale Fowler** (R- Harrisburg). Sen. **Sally Turner** (R-Beason) will be the co-chair of the Senate State Government Committee along with Sen. **Patrick Joyce** (D-Kankakee).

Illinois Senate President **Don Harmon** said that he is glad Illinois Senate Republican Leader **John Curran** reached out with this idea. "At one point in our not-so-distant history this was a common practice in the Senate," Harmon said. "I think we both hope that it will foster bipartisan cooperation on how we can best meet the needs of people all across our great state." Curran said he appreciates Harmon's effort for bipartisanship. "Having members from both parties at the helm of these committees will encourage greater collaboration and dialogue, and lead to better outcomes for the people of Illinois."

### **MEDICAID WORKING GROUP CREATED**

Members of each legislative caucus will participate in a Medicaid Working Group. This year's group will be led by House Majority Leader **Robyn Gabel** and Senator **Ann Gillespie**. Traditionally, the working group reviews all items that may impact the Medicaid program and works to find a bipartisan consensus after meeting with various groups.

### **GOV. PRITZKER ANNOUNCES \$40 MILLION MEGASITES GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

Gov. Pritzker, along with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives, and Intersect Illinois in Pullman, announced \$40 million in Rebuild Illinois capital funds to supercharge the development of megasites – large, developed sites ready for occupancy for manufacturers, distribution centers, industrial centers, and more. The competitive grant opportunity is open to governments, private businesses, or non-profits to support site development to attract large-scale industrial investments in underutilized areas and former industrial sites.

### **ADVOCACY GROUPS PUSH FOR EXPANSIVE PAID FAMILY, MEDICAL LEAVE**

A coalition of advocacy and labor groups is pushing for a state law to give Illinois workers 26 weeks of paid leave if they need to recover from an illness, domestic or sexual violence, or take care of a sick family member or new child. The same groups just celebrated a legislative victory last month with the passage of five days of paid leave – negotiations that took four years but were ultimately agreed to by the state's most influential business groups and even garnered some Republican votes. The coalition's initial proposal – encapsulated in [Senate Bill 1234](#) and [House Bill 1530](#) – would cover all employers in Illinois and all employees who earn at least \$1,600 annually. Paid leave would also apply to contract workers.

## **BUSINESS GROUP ADVOCATES FOR INCOME TAX ‘SURCHARGE’ AND OTHER MEASURES**

A report by the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago says that it could support income tax “surcharges” for people and companies, lasting 10 years, provided the additional revenue is earmarked mostly for public employee pensions. It was a notable message from a group that opposed Gov. Pritzker’s plan for a graduated income tax, with higher rates for higher incomes. Pritzker’s graduated income tax was voted down in a referendum last year.

Among other moves to be considered is a broadening of state sales taxes to cover more services, expanding the income tax to include retirees’ earnings, and forcing members of state retirement systems to pay more for health care.

## **ICC REPORTS DIVERSE SPENDING BY ILLINOIS UTILITIES**

Nearly half of the \$5.1 billion spent by Illinois’ six largest investor-owned utilities went toward diverse enterprises, including minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, and small businesses. The Illinois Commerce Commission’s Office of Diversity and Community Affairs annual report shows that Ameren Illinois, Aqua Illinois, ComEd, Illinois American Water, Nicor Gas, Peoples Gas and Light, and Coke Company/North Shore Gas Company spent more than \$2 billion from these suppliers.

## **CANNABIS OVERSIGHT OFFICE STUDYING DISCRIMINATION IN LICENSING SYSTEM**

The Illinois Cannabis Regulation Oversight Office announced the launch of a year-long review process evaluating the state’s social equity licensing system to determine whether discrimination exists within the state’s cannabis industry. The CROO Disparity Study will end with a report on accessibility in the industry and examine potential changes in cannabis regulation to address any potential discrimination.

## **LACK OF BROADBAND ACCESS IN ILLINOIS**

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s Office of Broadband is concerned about the number of homes that lack broadband access, and the impact that it will have on creation of jobs or remote work/school opportunities. More rural parts of the state have lower rates of internet availability. More than 30% of Menard County’s population is without broadband; about 5,000 households in Sangamon County do not have internet-reaching broadband speed. Last year, broadband spending in Illinois was boosted by federal funds such as the American Recovery Plan Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The state will be making nearly \$400 million in grants available.

## **PRITZKER SIGNS 15 BILLS FROM PREVIOUS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Gov. Pritzker recently signed 15 bills passed by the legislature during the January lame duck session. There are just four bills still awaiting action by the governor.

The governor approved the following bills:

- [HB 45](#) - Amends the Election Code regarding signature verification and Judicial Subcircuits. Effective immediately.
- [HB 268](#) - Creates the Tourism Preservation and Sustainability District Act. Effective immediately.
- [HB 1064](#) - Abolishes life without parole for people under 21 years of age. Effective January 1, 2024.

- [HB 1563](#) - Amends the CMS Services Law of the Civil Administration Code to remove the preference for location of jobs in Sangamon County. Effective Immediately.
- [HB 1688](#) - Allows cars, vans, and other first division vehicles to operate as school buses under a Secretary of State permit. Effective July 1, 2023.
- [HB 1859](#) - Amends the Cook County Forest Preserve Article of the Illinois Pension Code. Effective June 1, 2023.
- [HB 2369](#) - Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act regarding Veterans Assistance Commissions. Effective immediately.
- [HB 2542](#) - Allows qualifying individuals who previously had a felony conviction to legally change their name. Effective January 1, 2024.
- [HB 2870](#) - Amends the Regional Water Commissions Division of the Illinois Municipal Code. Effective immediately.
- [HB 3878](#) - Makes changes to the Rental Housing Support Program. Effective July 1, 2023.
- [HB 4228](#) - Amends the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act. Effective immediately.
- [HB 4245](#) - Amends the Illinois Plumbing License Law to ensure that lawn irrigation and lawn sprinkler system installation is well regulated in perpetuity past the current sunset date of January 1, 2024. Effective immediately.
- [HB 5107](#) - Allows school principals to be eligible for collective bargaining exclusively in Chicago. Effective immediately.
- [HB 5285](#) - Creates transparency in the process of hiring school principals in an effort to ensure schools have the necessary information to hire the most qualified candidate exclusively in Chicago. Effective immediately.
- [HB 5542](#) - Makes various changes regarding the operations of the Illinois Joint Forces Foundation Fund. Effective January 1, 2024.

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

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