ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

February 15, 2022
By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

The Illinois Senate returned to meeting in person last week as it worked toward its February 10 Senate committee deadline. A few dozen bills have received deadline extensions, but we are starting to get a better picture of the legislation that the Senate will take up this spring.

The House continues with remote committee work this week. Hundreds of new bills have been assigned to committees for hearings. The House deadline for House bills to pass out of House committees is this Friday, February 18.

Both the House and Senate will return to Springfield this week for in-person work, although committee action remains virtual.

***Please review ICCTA's BILL LIST.
Due to the virtual committee process, it is vital that we know your positions
so that legislation does not slip through unopposed.***

2022 KEY SESSION DATES
- February 18: House Committee Deadline
- February 25: Senate 3rd Reading Deadline
- March 4: House 3rd Reading Deadline

    *** *LEGISLATION SWITCHES CHAMBERS* ***

- March 25: House & Senate Committee Deadline
- April 1: House & Senate 3rd Reading Deadline
- April 8: Adjournment

2022 CAMPAIGN UPDATES
Petition circulation for the 2022 election began on Thursday, January 13, with signatures due March 14. Of course, the individuals filing paperwork to run for office are not "official" candidates until they file their petitions to get on the ballot next month.

- Rep. **Sandy Hamilton** (R-Springfield), newly appointed to the 99th House district vacated by Rep. **Mike Murphy**, announced that she will run for Senate against appointed Sen. **Doris Turner** (D-Springfield) in the 48th Senate district this fall.
- Republican **Jennifer Sanalitro** will run for the vacant 48th House District. Sanalitro is a sales executive at a packaging company.
- Democrat East Alton Mayor **Joe Silkwood** will challenge Rep. **Amy Elik** (R-Alton) in the new 111th District in northern Madison County.

- Sen. **Win Stoller** (R-Peoria) will be challenged in a primary by insurance business owner **Brett Nicklaus** from Dixon.
- Democrat **Mary Morgan** of Island Lake, who works in the Wauconda School District, has filed paperwork to challenge Rep. **Marty McLaughlin** (R-Barrington Hills) in the redrawn 52nd House district.
- Democrat McLean County Board member and professional classical musician **Sharon Chung** will run for state representative in the 91st District. Chung is also an adjunct professor at Millikin University. She will likely face **Karla Bailey Smith** in the primary. Normal Town Council member **Scott Preston**, a Republican, announced his bid for the 91st last month. Current House members representing the Bloomington-Normal area have already announced that they will not seek re-election: Rep. **Dan Brady** is running for Secretary of State, and Rep. **Keith Sommer** is retiring at the end of his term.
- Republican **Jack Vrett**, a licensed attorney and Army veteran, launched his campaign for the 53rd House District, which is currently represented by Rep. **Mark Walker** (D-Arlington Heights).
- Democrat Plainfield Village Trustee **Harry Benton** announced another House bid yesterday. Benton lost to Republican Rep. **Mark Batinick** in 2020 but Batinick is not running again. So far, at least two Republicans are hoping to replace him: **Michelle Smith** and **Thomas McCullagh**. McCullagh was defeated by Democratic Sen. **Meg Loughran Cappel** in 2020; Smith is the Plainfield Township Clerk and a business owner.
- Bartlett Mayor **Kevin Wallace**, a Republican, announced his campaign for the 49th House district, a seat currently held by first-year Rep. **Maura Hirschauer** (D-Batavia).

COVID UPDATE
The decline in the state's COVID-19 hospitalizations has been faster than at any point in the pandemic – nearly a 25% drop over the last week. Illinois Department of Public Health Director Dr. **Ngozi Ezike** has said that 89% of those hospitalizations are in unvaccinated individuals. Approximately 75% of the state's population has received at least one dose of the vaccine, putting Illinois at the top of Midwestern states.

STATEWIDE INDOOR MASK REQUIREMENT EXPIRES FEBRUARY 28 – WITH EXCEPTIONS
As COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations continue to decline, Illinoisans can resume activities without wearing a mask indoors on February 28 except where required by federal, state, or local laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance. Federal requirements, in effect through at least March 18, include all transportation systems such as airports, planes, trains, and buses, and in high-risk settings including healthcare facilities and congregate care (prisons, shelters, etc). Masking requirements will also continue to apply in all daycare settings. The state intends to continue masking requirements in P-12 schools subject to pending litigation, which impacts a number of schools.

Chicago and Cook County will also lift restrictions, following the statewide mask mandate lift.

LEGISLATION FILED TO ADDRESS ORGANIZED RETAIL THEFT
The Illinois Retail Merchants Association, in partnership with Attorney General Kwame Raoul, have announced a sweeping proposal to combat organized retail crime, prevent illicit trade, and provide retailers additional tools to protect the safety of employees and customers. According to the press release: "The proposal calls for the creation of the Organized Retail Crime Act, providing the emphasis and

focus required to combat this dangerous form of retail theft, which is usually performed by criminal groups with the goal of reselling stolen items to fund illicit activities. Those participating in smash and grab robberies as well as the looting of supply chain vehicles could be prosecuted for organized retail crime. Prosecutors would be given wider discretion to bring charges regardless of where the crime takes place. For instance, if the conspiracy, theft, and selling all occurred in different jurisdictions, each jurisdiction would have the ability to prosecute the whole crime."

MUNICIPAL LEAGUE PROPOSES FUNDING INCREASE, PERMANENT REMOTE MEETINGS
The Illinois Municipal League is seeking increased state funding dedicated to local governments and the permanent ability to hold remote meetings beyond the scope of COVID-19 emergency orders. IML has proposed would like to see an operating budget passed that includes an increase in the share of state income tax revenue that goes to the Local Government Distributive Fund (which local governments use for services and public works projects). IML would like to see 10% of income tax revenues go to the LGDF; currently just about 6% of funds go to the LGDF. Additionally, IML wants to enable local governments to continue holding remote meetings, which are currently only possible thanks to COVID-19 public safety orders (Senate Bill 482).

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE
State Rep. **Sonya Harper** (D) recently held a stakeholder meeting to discuss the environmental justice communities bill, HB 4093. The business community was represented, along with the environmental groups, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, and the Attorney General and Governor offices. HB 4093 is a high priority for the environmental groups. The Illinois Environmental Council will work with EPA on revisions with new language next week.

$75 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDING FOR ABANDONED MINE CLEANUP
Illinois will receive more than $75 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Interior this year to boost efforts to clean up abandoned coal mines throughout the state. The federal money will be directed to projects where environmental hazards associated with abandoned mines have been detected, including issues such as acid mine drainage, clogged streams, and pollution. Currently, Illinois has 590 unfunded mine reclamation projects in its inventory with an estimated cost of at least $156 million.

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