

ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

February 8, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

CHANGES IN FEBRUARY SESSION DATES AND DEADLINES

This week, the Illinois General Assembly's spring session has been operating as it has every year – the chambers are organizing committees (see below lists) and bills are being filed, albeit slowly. So far, 706 House bills and 133 Senate bills have been filed. But session is about to enter uncharted territory – considering legislation in virtual committees.

The Senate will move online for February, conducting virtual committee meetings for the previously scheduled session days of February 9-11 and 16-18. Senate committee posting notices and hearings will be available on <https://www.ilga.gov/senate/committees/default.asp>. The Senate has also pushed back drafting and filing deadlines, postponing the drafting deadline for Senate bills from February 5 to **February 11**, and postponing the filing deadline from February 19 to **February 26**. That chamber's next scheduled session date is **March 2**.

The House will convene in person on Wednesday, **February 10**, to approve the House Rules, which we expect will enable them to convene virtual committees. To accommodate legislator requests to be included in Phase 1B of the vaccination plan, Gov. JB Pritzker will make a special location available in Springfield for legislators to receive the first dose on February 9. The introduction deadline for House bills is still **February 11**.

[Please click here for a list of community college-related bills identified to date.](#)

Gov. Pritzker will deliver his combined **State of the State and Budget Address on February 17**

LAME DUCK BILLS

The 12 House bills that passed both houses during the January 2021 **lame duck session** were sent to Gov. Pritzker this week, starting the 60-day clock the Governor has to take action on each bill. The remaining Senate bills have not yet been sent to the Governor. House bills include the controversial criminal justice reform package and the prejudgment interest bill initiated by the trial attorneys.

REDISTRICTING NEWS

Congressional, State Senate, and State House districts must be redrawn every 10 years with new census data. We learned late last week that the census data will be delayed, and the legislature will need to be creative to get maps enacted, especially since there is a constitutional deadline to make it happen by June 30.

LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS...AND AN INDICTMENT

The Senate welcomed two new members to the Democrat caucus last weekend. **Mike Simmons** has been appointed to represent the 7th District, replacing former Sen. **Heather Steans** (D-Chicago). Simmons—who is Black (half African-American, half Ethiopian) and gay—is the founder and CEO of Blue Sky Strategies, as well as deputy director of My Brother's Keeper, a national program based at the Obama Foundation that works to remove the opportunity gap for young men of color. **Doris Turner** was unanimously selected by the Democratic County Chairs of the 48th District to fill the remainder of the term of former Sen. **Andy Manar** (D-Bunker Hill). Turner is the first Black person to represent Springfield and Sangamon County in the state legislature. She has served on the Springfield City Council representing Ward 3 since 2011. Prior to that, she spent a decade serving as a Sangamon County Board member and has been the county's Democratic Party chairwoman since 2012.

State Rep. **André Thapedi** (D-Chicago) is set to resign from his seat representing the southside 32nd District in the Illinois House after 12 years. Thapedi said he wants to take an active role in searching for a replacement for his seat. Thapedi chairs the Judiciary - Civil Committee, so this will set off an internal contest to replace him. An

official date for his resignation is not yet known. He's the first member of the House to be sworn in last month to announce his resignation.

Former state Senator and former gubernatorial candidate **Sam McCann** has been indicted for spending campaign money for personal use. According to federal charges announced by the U.S. Department of Justice, McCann allegedly spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign money on personal vehicles and debts through the charges of fraud, money laundering, and tax evasion. It is also alleged that McCann purchased a recreational trailer and mobile home with campaign funds – and then used an online account to rent it to himself and funnel money into his personal account.

NEW ILGOP CHAIR CHOSEN

Members of the state GOP's Central Committee have selected **Don Tracy** of Springfield, as the next chair of the Illinois Republican Party. Tracy, a businessman and lawyer, and his 11 siblings own the family business, Dot Foods, Inc., a national redistributor of food and related products. Tracy is the first chair of the Illinois Republican Party from outside Chicago and the collar counties since 1988.

SENATE COMMITTEE CHAIR AND MINORITY SPOKESPERSON ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Minority Spokesperson</u>
Agriculture	Sen. Patrick Joyce	Sen. Darren Bailey
Appropriations	Sen. Elgie Sims Jr.	
Assignments	Sen. Kimberly A. Lightford	Sen. John Curran
Behavioral & Mental Health	Sen. Laura Fine	Sen. Terri Bryant
Commerce	Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton	Sen. Dale Fowler
Criminal Law	Sen. John Connor	Sen. Steve McClure
Education	Sen. Christopher Belt	Sen. Sue Rezin
Energy & Public Utilities	Sen. Michael E. Hastings	Sen. Sue Rezin
Environment & Conservation	Sen. Melinda Bush	Sen. Jil Tracy
Ethics	Sen. Ann Gillespie	Sen. John Curran
Executive	Sen. Cristina Castro	Sen. Jason Barickman
Executive Appointments	Sen. Laura Murphy	Sen. Jason Plummer
Financial Institutions	Sen. Laura Ellman	Sen. Jason Plummer
Health	Sen. Julie Morrison	Sen. Dave Syverson
Health Care Access & Availability	Sen. Patricia Van Pelt	Sen. Dave Syverson
Higher Education	Sen. Scott Bennett	Sen. Dale Fowler
Human Rights	Sen. Celina Villanueva	Sen. Sue Rezin
Insurance	Sen. Napoleon Harris, III	Sen. Dave Syverson
Judiciary	Sen. Rachelle Crowe	Sen. Jil Tracy
Labor	Sen. Linda Holmes	Sen. Chapin Rose
Licensed Activities	Sen. Emil Jones, III	Sen. Neil Anderson
Local Government	Sen. Steve Stadelman	Sen. Craig Wilcox
Pensions	Sen. Robert F. Martwick	Sen. Brian Stewart
Public Safety	Sen. Robert Peters	Sen. Neil Anderson
Revenue	Sen. Heather Steans	Sen. Don DeWitte
State Government	Sen. Steven M. Landek	Sen. Win Stoller
Tourism & Hospitality	Sen. Sara Feigenholtz	Sen. Sally Turner
Transportation	Sen. Ram Villivalam	Sen. Don DeWitte
Veterans Affairs	Sen. Thomas Cullerton	Sen. Craig Wilcox

HOUSE COMMITTEE CHAIR AND MINORITY SPOKESPERSON ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Minority Spokesperson</u>
\$ Elementary & Sec Ed	Rep. Will Davis	Rep. Tom Bennett
\$ General Services	Rep. Fred Crespo	Rep. Brad Halbrook
\$ Higher Education	Rep. LaShawn Ford	Rep. Jeff Keicher
\$ Human Services	Rep. Camille Lilly	Rep. Tom Demmer
\$ Public Safety	Rep. Rita Mayfield	Rep. Dan Swanson
Adoption & Child Welfare	Rep. Kathleen Willis	Rep. Keith Sommer
Agriculture & Conservation	Rep. Sonya Harper	Rep. Charlie Meier
Child Care Accessibility/Early Childhood**	Rep. Kathleen Willis	Rep. Joe Sosnowski
Cities & Villages	Rep. Anthony DeLuca	Rep. Andrew Chesney
Consumer Protection	Rep. Jonathan Carroll	Rep. Norine Hammond
Counties & Townships	Rep. Sam Yingling	Rep. Brad Halbrook
Cybersecurity, Data Analytics & IT	Rep. Lamont Robinson, Jr.	Rep. Keith Wheeler
Economic Opportunity & Equity	Rep. Nicholas Smith	Rep. Keith Sommer
Elem/Sec Edu: Admin, Licensing & Charters	Rep. Sue Scherer	Rep. Tom Morrison
Elem/Sec Edu: School Curriculum & Policies	Rep. Michelle Mussman	Rep. Avery Bourne
Energy & Environment	Rep. Ann Williams	Rep. David Welter
Ethics & Elections**	Rep. Kelly Burke	Rep. Ryan Spain
Executive	Rep. Robert Rita	Rep. Keith Wheeler
Financial Institutions	Rep. Mark Walker	Rep. C.D. Davidsmeyer
Health Care Availability & Accessibility	Rep. LaToya Greenwood	Rep. David Welter
Health Care Licenses	Rep. Theresa Mah	Rep. Randy Frese
Higher Education	Rep. Katie Stuart	Rep. Dan Brady
Housing**	Rep. Will Guzzardi	Rep. Deanne Mazzochi
Human Services	Rep. Anna Moeller	Rep. Norine Hammond
Immigration & Human Rights**	Rep. Jenifer Gong-Gershowitz	Rep. Jeff Keicher
Insurance	Rep. Thaddeus Jones	Rep. Dan Brady
International Trade & Commerce**	Rep. Andre Thapedi	Rep. Charlie Meier
Judiciary – Civil	Rep. Andre Thapedi	Rep. Deanne Mazzochi
Judiciary – Criminal	Rep. Justin Slaughter	Rep. Dave Severin
Labor & Commerce	Rep. Marcus Evans	Rep. Steve Reick
Mental Health & Addiction	Rep. Deb Conroy	Rep. Dave Severin
Museums, Arts & Cultural Enhancement**	Rep. Camille Lilly	Rep. Randy Frese
Personnel & Pensions	Rep. Michael Halpin	Rep. Mark Batinick
Police & Fire**	Rep. Frances Hurley	Rep. Mike Marron
Prescription Drug Affordability & Accessibility	Rep. Will Guzzardi	Rep. Tom Demmer
Public Utilities	Rep. Lawrence Walsh, Jr.	Rep. Keith Wheeler
Restorative Justice	Rep. Kelly Cassidy	Rep. Tony McCombie
Revenue & Finance	Rep. Michael Zalewski	Rep. Steve Reick
State Government Administration	Rep. Stephanie Kifowit	Rep. Joe Sosnowski
Tourism**	Rep. Lamont Robinson, Jr.	Rep. Dave Severin
Transportation: Regulation, Roads & Bridges	Rep. Martin Moylan	Rep. Mike Marron
Transportation: Vehicles & Safety	Rep. John D'Amico	Rep. Tim Butler
Veterans Affairs**	Rep. Stephanie Kifowit	Rep. Dan Swanson

**Special Committee

FEDERAL STIMULUS PACKAGE UPDATE

A group of Republican senators recently discussed its [\\$618 billion counterproposal](#) to President Joe Biden's [\\$1.9 trillion relief bill](#) with the White House. The counterproposal does not include any aid for state or local governments – a crucial element for the Illinois budget to avoid devastating cuts. Biden's plan includes **\$350 billion in direct state aid to state and city governments**, in addition to \$130 billion proposed to help reopen public schools. The aid for state and local government is one of the most debated pieces of the legislation.

Ten Republican senators are behind the proposal - precisely the number Democrats may need on their side to prevent a filibuster. Critics of the Republican proposal call it a drop in the bucket. Democrats can pass their bill with a 51-vote majority using a process called "budget reconciliation," though bipartisan support is preferred.

Congressional committees are set to start crafting legislation this week on specific components of President Biden's Covid-19 relief plan after the U.S. House and Senate each approved budget resolutions for 2021. Friday's votes in the two chambers set up a legislative course to enact Biden's stimulus without Republican votes -- a path that the president indicated he now supports, after attempts to win GOP backing for his plan failed.

COVID-19 UPDATE & REGIONAL METRICS

Last Friday, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 3,660 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease in Illinois, including 83 additional deaths. As of Friday, the total number of cases in Illinois is 1,141,219, including 19,526 deaths. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from January 29–February 4, 2021 is 3.3%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from January 29–February 4, 2021 is 4.3%.

All information pertaining to the Coronavirus Response from the Governor's office and agencies can be found [here](#).

ALL REGIONS HAVE REOPENED under [Phase 4](#) (which allows indoor dining and drinking for up to 10 people, gatherings of up to 50 people, capacities of 50% in stores and fitness centers, and puts youth sports like basketball back in business.)

Phase 4 represents the least aggressive measures until the end of the public health response. **How a region enters Phase 5:** Developments like widespread vaccination, combined with the universal protection measures required in all previous phases and tiers, ensure "health care capacity is no longer a concern, or there are no new cases over a sustained period." Phase 5 will mean the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is over. However, if there is another resurgence, a region **can return to Tier 1 of Phase 4** IF testing positivity rates are greater than 8% for three straight days OR there are sustained increases in testing positivity rates and hospitalizations over 7-10 days and ICU bed availability of 20% or less.

VACCINES UPDATE

COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Data: <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinedata?county=Illinois>

As of Friday, a total of 1,635,925 doses of vaccine have been delivered to providers in Illinois, including Chicago. In addition, approximately 496,100 doses have been allocated to the federal government's Pharmacy Partnership Program for long-term care facilities. This brings the total Illinois doses to 2,132,025. A total of 1,231,418 vaccines have been administered in Illinois as of Thursday last week. On Thursday, Illinois set a new one-day vaccination record with a total of 74,965 doses administered. **Nearly one in 12 Illinois residents have received one dose of the vaccine.**

To increase the limited supply of vaccine to eligible recipients, Illinois is working with Walgreens and CVS pharmacies to **temporarily redirect approximately 97,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses** that have not yet been used for the federal Pharmacy Partnership Program to providers across the state. After this transfer, approximately 110,000 doses will still remain available for the federal effort to vaccinate long-term-care residents; the federal program is administering approximately 36,000 doses per week.

President Biden's administration will begin to test a program to provide coronavirus vaccines directly to pharmacies **in Illinois** and elsewhere, as officials seek to increase the pace of U.S. inoculations. Biden's team announced last week that they will ship roughly 1 million doses per week to about 6,500 pharmacies nationwide as a trial run, beginning February 11. They also will boost shipments to states by 5 percent to 10.5 million doses per week, up from the 10 million doses announced a week earlier.

Vaccination **locations** continue to increase. On Thursday, 80 new locations were added to the list of COVID-19 vaccination locations open to the public for a current total of 390 locations. The new sites include 78 additional Walgreens locations for a total of 170 stores across the state, 15 local health department sites, 17 Kroger sites in Central and Southern Illinois, six Mariano's sites in Northern Illinois, 16 Hy-Vee locations, 92 Jewel-Osco locations, as well as five Illinois National Guard supported locations in Cook and St. Clair counties. There are now **12 State supported COVID-19 vaccination locations**.

At this time, vaccinations are by appointment only and are extremely limited due to the limited amount of vaccine. Information for locations is now listed on the coronavirus.illinois.gov website.

A new website aims to help Chicagoans find Covid-19 vaccine appointments, despite low supplies. Chicagoans can sign up on the [Zocdoc Vaccine Scheduler](#) to be notified as appointments become available. The site is free to use and has translation support in more than 100 languages. The city says several local medical systems and hospitals, such as Erie Family Health and Rush University Medical Center, are already signed up.

HIGHER EDUCATION REQUESTS VACCINE PRIORITY

Public university and community college presidents wrote to Gov. Pritzker recently, asking him to make higher education a priority for COVID-19 vaccinations. With a limited number of doses available, Gov. Pritzker explained he made the decision to place higher ed staff and students in the Phase 1C class -- or at least behind K-12 students. He followed the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to set the state vaccination priorities. The Governor also expressed confidence students will be able to attend school in the fall.

IL SPORTS BETTING REVENUE RECORD

The [Illinois Gaming Board](#) has released its full sports betting figures for the month of November, and Illinois set a new standard for the sixth month running with a traditional handle of \$449.2 million. November's handle was a 3.4 percent increase on October's amount of nearly \$434.6 million total dollars wagered at the state's eight sportsbook operators. The eight some generated just under \$41.3 million in revenue for November as they posted a win rate of 9.1 percent on a taxable handle of just under \$453.6 million. That resulted in nearly \$6.2 million for the state's tax coffers. Cook County received \$425,355 in tax revenue on 2 percent of adjusted gross revenue for all wagers placed in the county.

IDES ANNOUNCED PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING CONTINUED ASSISTANCE ACT

The Illinois Department of Employment Security has announced progress in implementing programmatic updates and changes to several unemployment programs contained within the Continued Assistance Act, signed into law on December 27, 2020. These updates will impact the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program, PUA overpayments waivers, and the Pandemic

Emergency Unemployment Compensation program, in addition to the creation of the Mixed-Earner Unemployment Compensation program.

SKY-HIGH RECREATIONAL CANNABIS SALES

After selling \$670 million worth of recreational marijuana during the first full year of legalization, Illinois pot shops reported record sales of \$88 million in January, outpacing the \$86 million reported in December.

ILLINOIS GAMING BOARD GIVE PRELIMINARY APPROVAL FOR A ROCKFORD CASINO

Last Thursday, the Illinois Gaming Board gave unanimous preliminary approval to plans for a new casino in Rockford. In announcing his support for the \$310 million Rockford plan, Gaming Board chair Charles Schmadeke said that officials were taking a close look at the investors in the project and reserved the right to rule out anybody who could be deemed unsuitable to profit from legalized gambling in Illinois. Business owner Dan Fischer of Naperville pitched the Rockford plan to the board last week, describing himself as the effort's "managing member." In addition to Fischer, other investors in the "Hard Rock International" casino include the wife of Cheap Trick guitarist Rick Nielsen and a former mayor of Rockford. The gaming board's "preliminary suitability" vote opens the way for a temporary casino and for construction of the permanent facility in Rockford, at the site of the old Clock Tower Resort, near Interstate 90. But the Gaming Board has not yet granted the license for the casino.

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION PROPOSES CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING STANDARDS

The Illinois State Board of Education is proposing that the state implement [culturally responsive teaching and learning standards](#) for teacher preparation programs by October 2025. The new standards will train educators — regardless of their racial or economic background — to address implicit bias, systems of oppression in society, value students' lived experiences, create relationships with students' families and communities, and represent students' identities in curriculum. The new standards will be reviewed on February 16 by the bipartisan Joint Commission on Administrative Rules. At that time, Commission members will have the choice to approve, dismiss, or provide recommendations for ISBE. Republican legislators have spoken out against the proposal.

STATE REPUBLICANS INTRODUCE "VOTER EMPOWERMENT PROJECT"

Republican leaders in both chambers want Illinois voters to have more power in the legislative process. They are seeking to pass a package of resolutions to allow residents to amend the state's Constitution. In short, Republicans want to give residents more opportunities to repeal unpopular laws and remove corrupt politicians. They feel that these ideas could bring checks and balances back to state government following decades of power centralized under former House Speaker Mike Madigan.

EQUITY IN TRANSPORTATION REQUEST

Over 50 lawmakers, including new House Speaker Welch, signed on to a letter to the Illinois Department of Transportation, calling for a priority on equity in employment and bringing transportation to minority and low-income communities. According to the letter, IDOT should include community members in planning projects, hire a more diverse workforce, and deliver transportation investments to minority communities.

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

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