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## ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report March 27, 2023

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*Both chambers were very busy in Springfield last week. Friday was the Third Reading deadline in the Illinois House of Representatives, which meant members spent 8-12 hours on the floor each day working to send their bills to the Senate. In addition to floor action, the House considered numerous amendments at the committee level to prepare legislation for final passage. As of Friday, the House passed a total of 443 bills over to the Senate, and the Senate passed 68 bills to the House. This Friday, March 31, is the Senate's Third Reading deadline. Appropriations committees also continue to hear from state agencies regarding their Fiscal Year 2024 budget requests.*

**\*\*\*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

- March 31: Deadline – Third Reading of Senate bills in the Senate
- April 3 - 14: SPRING BREAK
- 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

### IMA BACKS BILLS SUPPORTING HANDS-ON CAREER EDUCATION

The Illinois Manufacturers Association and several state lawmakers are backing three bills this session that they say would help make it easier for students to attract students to professional careers that may not require college degrees and remove barriers to those experiences. [House Bill 3590](#) would ease liability insurance requirements that some community colleges and high schools say are too expensive to provide hands-on experiences. [HB 3307](#) would allow high school students to take two years of career education courses in lieu of the current foreign language requirement. Sen. Don DeWitte (R-St. Charles) and Rep. Suzanne Ness (D-Carpentersville) are sponsoring a pair of twin bills ([Senate Bill 991/HB 3287](#) and [SB 992/HB 3286](#)), both of which they said would support career tech educators who co-work at manufacturing facilities in Illinois.

### ILLINOIS DEMOCRATS SPENDING IN LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD RACES

The Illinois Democratic Party is investing about \$300,000 in school and library board elections to combat candidates viewed as extremist conservatives. Historically, voter turnout for school board elections is low, but in recent years, school board meetings and elections across the country have become more contentious over

topics such as COVID-19 mitigation policies, book bans, and diversity, equity and inclusion curriculum. The party is supporting 84 candidates across 17 counties and sending direct mail against 74 candidates whom it calls extremists.

### **MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES DRIVING COLLEGE DROPOUT RATES**

A [new Lumina Foundation-Gallup State of Higher Education survey](#) has found that a significant number of college students struggle with their mental health, and a growing share have or consider dropping out. More than 40% of students currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree program had considered dropping out in the past six months, up from 34% in the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **GIANNOULIAS FEARS 'CATASTROPHIC' DATA HACK**

According to Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, Illinois risks a "catastrophic" security breach of highly confidential personal data on millions of residents unless it soon upgrades outmoded computer systems based on 1980s technology used to store and process Illinoisans' data, including their home addresses, vehicle registrations, Social Security numbers and organ donor information. A report estimates replacing the old systems and training their operators will cost roughly \$200 million.

### **FEDERAL LABOR LAW BARS SOME BIPA CLAIMS**

In a unanimous opinion, the Illinois Supreme Court opined that there are instances where U.S. labor law bars unionized workers from suing their employers for violations of the state's biometric privacy law. In *Walton v. Roosevelt University*, a group of campus security workers sued Roosevelt University in Chicago over the use of fingerprints for timekeeping, claiming the university did not properly seek consent under the Biometric Information Privacy Act. The Court ruled that federal labor law preempts that right for unionized workers because their agreements establish procedures for arbitrators to hear legal disputes. This is the third Supreme Court opinion related to BIPA released this year, and follows a 4-3 opinion issued earlier this month that urged the General Assembly to review the policy behind BIPA.

### **NEW DEPUTY GOVERNOR FOR PUBLIC SAFETY APPOINTED**

Gov. J.B. Pritzker has named Bria Scudder as his new Deputy Governor for Public Safety, Infrastructure, Environment, and Energy Tuesday, filling the role left by outgoing Deputy Gov. Christian Mitchell. Scudder previously worked as first assistant to Mitchell. She currently works as director of state government affairs for pharmaceutical company AbbVie.

### **SOS AWARDS \$21 MILLION TO COMBAT CARJACKINGS & VEHICLE THEFTS**

To combat the surge of carjackings and motor vehicle thefts in Illinois, the Secretary of State's office is awarding grants totaling more than \$21 million to six police organizations. The SOS collects an annual \$1 assessment on automobile insurance policies from the insurance industry to fund grant awards. In addition, the Illinois General Assembly appropriated an additional infusion of \$30 million last year to combat statewide carjacking and motor vehicle theft.

## **COMED TRIAL CONTINUES**

The federal government's case against four former executives and lobbyists for ComEd continued this week and is expected to last two months. The jury heard testimony from State Rep. Bob Rita, an ex-ComEd attorney, and Will Cousineau, a former top staffer to then-House Speaker Michael Madigan. Their testimony revolves around Madigan's level of involvement on the passage of 2016 utility legislation.

## **ILLINOIS LEADS NATION IN CORN, SOYBEAN PRODUCTION**

Illinois leads the nation in corn and soybean production, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agriculture Statistics Service. The Prairie State has remained the consistent leader of soybean production in the country, while having the five highest counties for corn production: McLean, Iroquois, Livingston, LaSalle, and Champaign.

## **STATE OFFERING BACK TO BUSINESS GRANTS TO SMALL BUSINESSES**

A new round of Back-to-Business grants supporting small businesses are now open, according to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. B2B grants are funded by the federal American Rescue Plan Act and support a variety of businesses, including restaurants, hotels, and venues. Applications are now open through April 5 for businesses to apply, and community navigators are available through DCEO. This block of funding provides \$50 million for restaurants, \$75 million for hotels, and \$50 million for arts organizations.

## **NEARLY \$700 MILLION SPENT ON MOVIE/TV PRODUCTION IN ILLINOIS**

More than \$700 million will be spent in Illinois by film and television production companies in 2023, according to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Expenditures have risen from \$560 million in 2019 to more than \$691 million in 2022. In 2022, the film and television industry in Illinois is estimated to have produced \$403 million in wages and 15,400 non-temporary hires.

## **NEARLY \$40 MILLION TO BE DISPERSED IN TITLE IX HOUSING SUPPORT**

The Illinois Housing Development Authority has announced almost \$39 million in grants to support the construction and/or redevelopment of units containing 100 units of affordable housing for the homeless, those struggling with mental illness, and other vulnerable groups.

## **MO'S LEGAL CANNABIS CUTS INTO IL'S MARKET**

Illinois had a three-year head start on legalizing recreational marijuana, but Missouri has surpassed it after just one month. In February 2023, its first month of legal sales, legal marijuana sales in Missouri totaled \$103 million. Illinois had \$120 million in recreational sales alone in February, which outpaced Missouri, but Illinois sales have plateaued somewhat recently. Some cannabis customers say that they prefer buying in Missouri, which offers home delivery, drive-through windows, and deli-style service, in which customers can see and smell the product before they buy it. Missouri has nearly twice as many licensed marijuana stores as Illinois. Illinois products often cost roughly twice as much, often running \$40 or more for an eighth of an ounce of flower. Missouri also taxes retail marijuana sales at a flat 6% while Illinois has a scale that goes up to a hefty 35%.

## **ICC'S ANNUAL HAZARDOUS MATERIAL REPORT FOUND MINIMAL VIOLATIONS ON ILLINOIS RAILWAYS**

The Illinois Commerce Commission has released its annual report on accidents and incidents involving hazardous materials on Illinois railroads. Of the 8,549 rail cars inspected in 2022, the ICC found violations in just 1.3% of all inspections. When these inspections first started in 1981, violations topped 12%.

## **FLENDER CORPORATION ANNOUNCES MANUFACTURING EXPANSION**

Flender Corporation will expand its current manufacturing facility in Elgin, creating 50 new full-time jobs and retaining 140 existing full-time jobs. New investments will enable the company to expand its manufacturing operations – including gear boxes for wind turbines – creating jobs and contributing to the economic development in the region. As part of its expansion, Flender received an Economic Development for a Growing Economy tax credit, which stipulates a goal of making a significant capital investment and creating 50 jobs and retaining 140 jobs.

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

### **Illinois Community College Trustees Association**

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