

ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

March 30, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

The Illinois House and Senate each have scheduled the **next two weeks as breaks** from the spring 2021 session. Both chambers, however, have scheduled several redistricting hearings and a few appropriations and subject-matter committee hearings during that period.

Both chambers held **virtual committee hearings** last week. Friday, March 26, was the deadline for moving House bills from a standing committee, but active bills can always be amended with new language. Leadership may also extend deadlines on specific bills of their choosing. The Senate extended its deadline for moving Senate bills from a first committee to Friday, April 16.

So far, prior to final deadlines, more than 600 bills have moved from House committees, and 230 from Senate committees, not counting shell bills that can be amended later. A large number of bills have been voted out of committee on the condition that sponsors hold their legislation on Second Reading for amendments to address various issues. This will create even more work for committees next month, as they deal with numerous amendments ahead of the April 23 Third Reading deadline.

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

Due to the new virtual committee process, it is vital that we know your positions so that legislation does not slip through unopposed.***

2021 KEY SESSION DATES

- March 29 - April 9 Spring break
- April 6 Consolidated election (including community college trustee seats)
- April 16 Deadline for substantive bills out of committee (Senate)
- April 23 Deadline for 3rd reading of substantive bills
- May 14 Deadline for substantive bills to pass out of committee in the opposite chamber
- May 28 Deadline for 3rd reading of substantive bills
- May 31 Adjournment

BILLS SIGNED AND PASSED

Gov. JB Pritzker signed the **Illinois Legislative Black Caucus' economic equity package** into law last week with Senate Bills [1480](#), [1608](#), [1792](#), and [1980](#). Together, the bills extend human rights protections, prevent predatory lending, provide equity in public housing access, and set new standards to lending to low and moderate-income communities.

[SB 72](#) passed both chambers as an alternative to the January lame-duck session bill (House Bill 3360) that imposed a 9% **prejudgment interest** on injury awards beginning from notice of injury. SB 72 imposes the prejudgment interest rate at 6% when the case is filed, capped at five years, and the interest does not apply to punitive damages, sanctions, statutory attorney's fees, or costs. *The Governor vetoed HB 3360 immediately after SB 72 passed the Senate.*

Both chambers have now passed [HB 158](#), which overhauls the state's health and human services system in a variety of ways. Both chambers have also approved [HB 1871](#), which makes permanent many of the expansions to vote-by-mail ballot access, curbside voting, and ballot drop boxes established during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2022 GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN

Gov. Pritzker donated \$35 million in personal money to his campaign account, signaling his intent to run for re-election in 2022. Republicans who have already put their names in the hat include **Sen. Darren Bailey**, former **Sen. Paul Schimpf**, businessman **Gary Rabine**, and former law enforcement officer **Christopher Roper**. Another potential candidate is **Richard Porter**, who represents Illinois on the Republican National Committee.

LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

Public hearings on the remap process began last week and will continue throughout April. Senate Democrats favor using American Community Survey data as a precursor to receiving US Census data in working to **redraw the state's legislative maps**. The Census data is delayed due to the pandemic; however, ACS data is not recent and may not include the most vulnerable communities. Republicans are hopeful the delayed census data will increase their odds of influencing the political maps from zero to a coin flip (a tiebreaker process spelled out in the Illinois Constitution). **Senate President Harmon** and **House Speaker Welch** are united in keeping the process in the hands of the General Assembly, which is headed by Democrats in both chambers. Gov. Pritzker, who campaigned on pushing an "independent method" of drawing the maps, says he will veto a partisan map (although he has not been specific about what that means).

HOUSE 32nd DISTRICT VACANCY

Democratic Committee leaders in the **32nd House District** will meet Friday, April 1, to interview candidates for the seat vacated by former **state Rep. Andre Thapedi**, who recently resigned.

COVID-19 & VACCINE UPDATE

COVID cases showed an uptick last week, with the **statewide positivity test rate now at 3.9%**. Chicago's seven-day average for new daily cases rose to 360, up 23% from the previous week. The spike in cases is being driven by residents 18 to 40 years old. Experts fear a third resurgence despite a large population being vaccinated.

As a result, Illinois has paused its move to the **"Bridge Phase" of reopening** that will allow for greater capacity limits at businesses and social gatherings. The state will move to the bridge phase once several metrics are met:

- 70% of residents 65 years and older must have received a first dose;
- Hospitals must maintain 20% or greater ICU bed availability;
- Hospitalizations for COVID-19, admissions for COVID-like illness and deaths must hold steady or decline over a 28-day monitoring period.

The age 65+ vaccinated population is now just over 69%, but rising hospitalizations and COVID case rates are preventing further reopening.

To address the concerning trend in increased COVID hospitalizations and case rates, **rapid response vaccination teams** are deploying to priority regions to accelerate vaccine administration. The Illinois Department of Public Health has authorized local health departments with low demand to vaccinate residents age 16+, in order to use the vaccine doses they currently have available. Federal projections show that the state is expected to receive 1 million doses this week.

Today, any Illinois resident in phase 1A, 1B and 1B+, as well as government workers, higher education staff, and media, can receive a free COVID-19 vaccine regardless of their zip code, immigration status, or health insurance at state-supported mass vaccination sites in Sangamon, Jackson, Winnebago, Madison, St. Clair, Adams, Kane, DuPage, and five sites across Cook County. All Illinois residents age 16+ will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine starting April 12. There are now more than **900 vaccination locations in Illinois** open to the public. These locations can be viewed online at <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/>.

LEARNING LOSS AND SUMMER SCHOOL

Gov. Pritzker said last week that summer school may be a way to **address learning loss** from remote classes. More than 460 school districts are still using some form of remote learning. His administration is suggesting school districts consider extending the school year.

DRIVER'S LICENSE AND ID CARD EXPIRATION DATES EXTENDED AGAIN

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White has extended all driver's license and ID card expiration dates an additional two months until **Aug. 1, 2021**. This extension does not apply to commercial driver's licenses and CDL learner's permits. White urged the public to visit his office's website at www.cyberdriveillinois.com to conduct transactions online when possible instead of visiting a Driver Services facility in person.

TRANSPORTATION REVENUE DOWN

[A new study](#) says that Illinois lost more than \$1 billion in transportation revenue because of the pandemic. Before Covid-19 hit, the state doubled its motor fuel tax rate, which would have generated \$2.5 billion per year for the state and local municipalities. Instead, Illinois saw just \$1.3 billion in annual MFT revenue, according to the non-partisan Illinois Economic Policy Institute. The transit statistics are equally startling, showing reductions in usage between 68% percent for Chicago Transit Authority buses and 100% for Metra rail.

MERCY HOSPITAL SALE APPROVED

The Illinois Health Facilities and Services Review Board approved the sale of Mercy Hospital to Michigan-based Insight, even though lawmakers asked for a delay to allow for potential local buyers. Reportedly, a group of physicians with Humboldt Park Health are interested, but the Board had to approve the sale to Insight given that the transfer of ownership documents was complete.

ACA SPECIAL ENROLLMENT EXTENDED

The federal government is extending the Affordable Care Act special enrollment period by three months to **August 15** to allow more Americans to take advantage of benefits granted through the COVID relief law.

GOV. PRITZKER ANNOUNCES CABINET RE-APPOINTMENTS

Gov. Pritzker announced the appointments of **Deborah Baker, Barbara Flores, Christopher Harris, Stephen Mathis, Deborah Simpson, and Thomas Tyrell** to the Workers' Compensation Commission; **Meredith Buckley and Maria Perez** to the Employment Security Board of Review; **Max Cerda, Drella Savage, and Jeffrey Mears** to the Prisoner Review Board; **Sen. Julie Morrison** to the Guardianship and Advocacy Commission; **Kenneth Shaw and Jennifer Delaney** to the Illinois Board of Higher Education; **Tonya Genovese** to the Southern Illinois University Board of Trustees; **Thomas Morsch and Luz Ramirez** to the Illinois Housing Development Authority; **Sonia Antolec, Marcellus Moore, and Mary Patricia Burns** to the Court of Claims; **Antoinette Hardy-Waller** to the Health Facilities and Services Review Board; **Pam McDonough** to the Capital Development Board; and **Brian Dunn** to be the Inspector General of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services. All of these appointments must be confirmed by the Illinois Senate.

NEW ACTING DIRECTOR AT IDFPR

Mario Treto, Jr. has been appointed Acting Secretary of the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation, following Secretary **Deborah Hagan's** retirement. Treto serves as the agency's director of the Division of Real Estate.

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

Illinois Community College Trustees Association

401 E. Capitol Avenue, Suite 200 • Springfield, IL 62701 • 217-528-2858 • www.communitycolleges.org

