

ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

April 27, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

The Illinois General Assembly reconvened in Springfield last week for in-person session and hybrid virtual committees. The 3rd Reading deadline was Friday, April 23. Lawmakers very quickly worked through hundreds of bills and put in some very long hours. However, many measures -- particularly in the Senate -- received deadline extensions. Both chambers will convene again this week, Tuesday through Thursday, to begin committee hearings on bills in the second chamber.

*****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

- 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

SAMPLE BILLS UNDER REVIEW

Here is a sampling of the range of bills under consideration this session:

[House Bill 642](#) (DeLuca) would statutorily enact a **10-year term limit** for the Senate President, House Speaker, and Minority Leaders in both chambers. Term limits are currently in place under the House and Senate Rules, but they are not codified in statute. HB 642 unanimously passed the House.

[HB 3447](#) (Ammons/Bush) **reduces penalties for drug possession** from a felony to a misdemeanor. A petitioner may petition the court to expunge the arrest record under certain circumstances. The bill narrowly passed the House 61-49.

[Senate Bill 4](#) (Gillespie) was amended last week to include a 95-page ethics overhaul. The Senate Ethics Committee held its first meeting of the 102nd General Assembly last Tuesday and discussed a **comprehensive ethics reform bill**, which is a collaboration of some ideas that emerged from the Joint Taskforce of Ethics Reform.

[HB 1443](#) (Ford), filed early last week, would require the state to hold two lotteries to issue **marijuana dispensary licenses**. One would be reserved for the 75 licenses that were supposed to be issued last May, using existing tie-breaker rules to distribute licenses to applicants who received perfect scores. The other round, which would distribute the 110 licenses meant to be issued this year, would be held for applicants who received at least 85 percent of the maximum score. The lotteries would be held simultaneously. A previous effort to fix the law during the lame-duck session in January was never called for a vote. HB 1443 was not called for a vote.

[HB 1063](#) (Ammons/Harmon) would **decriminalize HIV transmission** and provides a path to make it a public health crisis and encourages testing, treatment, and the disclosure of HIV status without the threat of criminal penalty. The House approved the measure with bipartisan support. If signed into law, Illinois could become the second state in the nation to fully decriminalize transmission of HIV.

[HB 796](#) (Mazzochi/Cunningham) would create defined criteria for a student to be eligible for guaranteed admission to the University of Illinois. Some of that criteria would include at least 36 hours at a community college and a 3.0 GPA. The bill passed the House almost unanimously.

FY 22 STATE BUDGET

State general revenue funds are faring much better than expected in 2021, increasing by over \$750 million over last year for February and March combined, largely due to higher individual and corporate income tax and sales tax receipts. The Commission on Government Forecasting and Affordability still reports, however, that the state has a serious structural deficit and has work to do to “operate under a sustainable model” by raising more revenue and/or reducing expenditures. If the state continues its average 2.7% spending growth increase each year, the Fiscal Year 2022 budget deficit will still be \$1.2 billion.

COGFA recommends using the federal stimulus money of \$7.5 billion to pay off the money borrowed from the Federal Reserve, pay down the unpaid bill backlog, generate as much federal matching funds as possible, and patch any COVID-based budget holes. (The federal government has not yet issued guidance on how the state can spend the federal aid funds but is expected within the next few weeks.)

Another revenue report by the University of Illinois’ Institute of Government and Public Affairs shows that in the last decade, Illinois’ spending exceeded incoming revenues by 10 percent each year. Pension payments for state employees rose an average 10.9% each year; state employee healthcare spending rose 6.9% annually, and Medicaid funding rose 6.8% each year.

PROGRESSIVE TAX RECOMMENDATIONS

The Raise Up Illinois Coalition of progressive organizations, including SEIU, Chicago Teachers Union, Illinois People’s Action, and others, is proposing budget initiatives to address racial injustices. The proposals aim at reducing tax exemptions that favor wealthy individuals (repealing estate tax exemption increase, taxing annual increases on stock values, and adding state tax to the federal carried interest exemption); reducing tax sheltering, and decoupling from the opportunity zone tax breaks. The Coalition believes that these changes would save or raise the state a combined \$1.3 billion or more to be used for investment in schools, healthcare, housing, jobs, and clean energy infrastructure.

COVID-19 & VACCINE UPDATE

The Illinois surge in COVID-19 cases appears to have plateaued, as the seven-day statewide test positivity rate has declined to 4.1%.

The Centers for Disease Control announced this week that 50% of American adults 18 and older have received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine. Here in Illinois, 53% of adults 18 and older have received at least one dose of the vaccine, and 27% are fully vaccinated. This week, the city of Chicago joined the rest of the state in expanding vaccine eligibility to individuals 16 and older, with the Pfizer vaccine only available for those 16 and 17 years of age. With this move, more than 10.2 million Illinois residents are eligible to receive this free vaccine at any of the more than 1,000 vaccination locations throughout the state.

Vaccine hesitancy is driving a supply imbalance across Illinois. In some localities, supply exceeds demand. The state has been redirecting as many as 50,000 first doses from downstate to the Chicago area.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES CAN OFFER U OF I COVIDSHIELD TEST

Illinois community colleges now have the ability to provide the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign’s saliva-based COVID-19 test at no cost to any state resident who wants a test. The testing will be funded through an

agreement between the Illinois Department of Public Health and SHIELD Illinois, the UI System unit that is deploying the test throughout the state. Under the agreement, the state's 49 community colleges can test their own students and staff, and can choose to serve as community testing sites where any Illinois resident can get a free test. There are currently five active SHIELD Illinois community testing sites – Black Hawk College, Heartland Community College, Lincoln Land Community College, Oakton Community College, and Sauk Valley Community College – and more in development.

EFFORT TO PRESERVE THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT DISTRIBUTIVE FUND

Local leaders across Illinois are calling on Gov. JB Pritzker and state lawmakers to avoid siphoning funds away from local governments for the state budget. Earlier this year, the Governor proposed cutting 10% (about \$152 million) from the Local Government Distributive Fund to make up for funds that would have been generated by the graduated income tax proposal that failed in November. LGDF is generated from income taxes paid by local residents and businesses and collected by the state before distributing it back to municipalities. Local leaders say they cannot afford to give up the LGDF funds, which already have been reduced from 10% to 6.06%. Without it, they say that they will be forced to make their own painful cuts and/or raise property taxes.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS DIRECTOR RESIGNS

Illinois State Board of Elections executive director Steve Sandvoss has informed the board he intends to retire effective June 30. He has been on administrative leave since April 5. Acting executive director Bernadette Matthews has led the Board of Elections in the interim and will continue as head of the agency until a permanent director is named. Sandvoss' administrative leave is related to a personal online extortion attempt that he reported to the Illinois State Police. The board immediately ordered an internal investigation, which revealed that no SBE data or systems had been compromised in the incident.

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

ICCTA

Illinois Community College Trustees Association

