



ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report April 9, 2024 **APRIL IS COMMUNITY COLLEGE MONTH**

While the Illinois Senate enjoyed its second week of a break from session, the House convened last week to advance legislation out of committee ahead of the April 5 deadline. The House was in session Tuesday through Thursday, abruptly cancelling Friday. The committee deadline was extended to April 19 for 81 bills.

Both chambers will be in Springfield on Tuesday, April 9. The Senate will spend most of its time on the floor ahead of the 3rd Reading deadline on Friday, April 12. The 3rd Reading deadline in the House is Friday, April 19.

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

It is vital that we know your positions so that legislation does not slip through unopposed.***

KEY 2024 SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- April 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate Bills in the Senate
- April 19: Deadline – Third Reading House Bills in the House
- May 2: **ICCTA LOBBY DAY**
- May 3: Deadline – House Bills out of Senate Committee & Senate Bills out of House Committee
- May 17: Deadline – Third Reading House Bills in Senate & Senate Bills in House
- May 24: Adjournment
- May 25-31: *Contingent Session Days for the Budget*

STATE REVENUES UP IN MARCH 2024

Final state revenues for March were up \$413 million from the prior year, putting state coffers about \$831 million ahead of this time last year. That revenue growth “helps solidify” the state’s most recent revenue projections driving ongoing budget discussions, according to the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability. Last month, COGFA increased revenue expectations for the current fiscal year by about \$2 billion from what was projected when lawmakers passed the budget last May. It now anticipates \$52.6 billion in revenue for the fiscal year that ends June 30.

There is one quarter left in the fiscal year, and April is a generally volatile month for state revenues as final income tax collections are received. COGFA noted that it is not making an adjustment to income tax projections at this time – although April’s performance could move the needle in either direction.

ISBE ALLOCATES \$4.3 MILLION FOR CTE EDUCATION PATHWAY GRANTS

The Illinois State Board of Education has allocated approximately \$4.3 million in state funding for the Career and Technical Education Career Pathway Grants, marking the fourth round of funding for this program. Since its inception, the program has received \$5.6 million in funding and has served nearly 12,000 high school students across 212 school districts and three community colleges.

The aim of these grants is to prepare current high school students in Illinois for careers in teaching and to address the teacher shortage in the state by recruiting diverse students into the field of education. Participants undergo tailored coursework, field experiences, and work-based learning opportunities to equip them for success in college-level teacher preparation programs. Recent data released by ISBE indicates year-over-year growth in the teaching profession for the past seven years. However, the demand for teachers has also increased, resulting in a 15% rise in unfilled teaching positions compared to the previous year.

COOK COUNTY CLERK KAREN YARBROUGH DIES

Cook County Clerk Karen Yarbrough, a former state representative, has died. She was 73. Yarbrough was elected in 2018 as the first African American and woman to serve as clerk in Cook County. When serving in the Illinois House, she was a leader of the Black Caucus, a member of Speaker Madigan's leadership team, and the first Black woman to preside over that chamber. Her legislative accomplishments include serving as lead sponsor of the SmokeFree Illinois Act, the abolition of the death penalty, and one of the first cyberstalking laws. She was also active in Democratic Party politics, working for both the Cook County Democratic Party and Democratic Party of Illinois.

Clerk Yarbrough was re-elected in 2022. Unless the Cook County Democratic party waits three to four months to make an appointment, a special election will be held in November.

SEN. GILLESPIE TO SERVE AS ACTING DIRECTOR OF DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

Illinois Department of Insurance director Dana Popish Severinghaus will step down from her role on April 15. Popish Severinghaus has served as DOI director since January 2021. Gov. JB Pritzker has appointed State Sen. Ann Gillespie as new acting director, pending Senate confirmation.

Gillespie, who will resign her Senate seat, has served in the Illinois General Assembly since 2019, representing Chicago's northwest suburbs. She sponsored the bill to create the state-based health insurance marketplace and has been a leader on health care consumer protection issues. Gillespie is a former business executive, health care attorney, and consultant in the health care field. She brings decades of experience in the insurance and managed care spaces to the role.

MORGAN WINTERS NAMED STATE-BASED MARKETPLACE DIRECTOR

DOI has announced the addition of Morgan Winters as the new acting director of the State-Based Marketplace, also known as the Illinois Health Benefits Exchange. The SBM is slated to start enrolling Illinoisans during the ACA Marketplace Open Enrollment Period beginning November 1, 2025. Winters most recently served as the deputy director and chief operating officer for MNsure, Minnesota's health insurance marketplace. Winters' leadership with MNsure also includes previous work as senior director of business operations, director of policy & plan management, and manager of operations and contact center.

NEW CHIEF OF STAFF TO CHICAGO MAYOR APPOINTED

Chicago mayor Brandon Johnson has appointed Dr. Cristina Pacione-Zayas as his chief of staff. Pacione-Zayas is the city's first Latina chief of staff, previously serving as first deputy chief of staff. She succeeds Rich Guidice following his resignation two weeks prior.

EXPIRATION OF ACA MARKETPLACE TAX CREDITS COULD RAISE INSURANCE RATES NATIONWIDE

Gains in individual health care coverage nationwide following the passage of the Affordable Care Act are in danger of backtracking unless Congress acts before the end of 2025, according to research from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. According to CBPP, the passage of the ACA has brought down the number of people without health insurance in the United States from 45.2 million in 2013 to 26.4 million in 2022. The report shows that 21.3 million people nationwide have an ACA marketplace plan for the year 2024 after 40 states and the District of Columbia expanded Medicaid under ACA and the American Rescue Plan Act.

In addition to the ACA, further cost relief was offered to shoppers on health insurance marketplaces following temporary enhancements to premium tax credits enacted in the American Recue Plan Act. PTCs reduced ACA marketplace enrollees' insurance premiums by an average of \$800 per year, according to the CBPP, and 91% of marketplace enrollees received PTCs. The CBPP report says that those tax credits are set to expire at the end of 2025 unless Congress acts. Were those tax credits to expire, the report predicts that fewer people overall would enroll in health insurance plans through ACA marketplaces. That could mean that enrollees who do not get PTCs would likely see increased premiums were PTCs to expire because of fewer applicants to the system and the ensuing effect on the risk pool making it likely rates would then go up.

ICC "FUTURE OF GAS" PROCEEDINGS

In March 2024, the Illinois Commerce Commission initiated a statewide Future of Gas workshop and will host a series of public meetings to develop an action plan for Illinois gas utilities' future infrastructure investments. The Future of Gas workshops will evaluate the impacts of Illinois' current decarbonization and electrification goals on the natural gas system. The main goal of the proceedings is to explore issues tied to decarbonization of the gas distribution system, including how the gas system may need to adapt. Additionally, the proceeding will develop recommendations for any future Commission action and any necessary legislative changes.

Phase 1 of the workshop series is designed to describe and expand on the issues outlined in the Commission's March 2024 initiating order, as well as identify issues related to decarbonization and the gas sector. The first meeting of Phase 1 was held on April 1, with meetings taking place weekly through mid-May. Phase 2 will examine the issues identified in Phase 1 to address stakeholder positions and perspectives, including areas of disagreement; assess short-, medium-, and long-term horizons; consider proposed legislation and/or regulatory solutions to individual topics; and present recommendations for ICC action where relevant. Meeting dates to explore Phase 2 have not yet been set.

CITY OF CHICAGO ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HOLDS HEARING ON NATURAL GAS LIMITS

The Chicago City Council's Committee on Environmental Protection and Energy held an hours-long subject matter hearing on its Clean and Affordable Buildings Ordinance last week. The proposal would set new indoor emissions standards for new buildings and additions to prohibit the use of natural gas heating systems and natural gas-powered appliances. Groups in favor of CABO argue that the legislation will mitigate the share of

greenhouse gas emissions that come from Chicago's built environment and lower energy costs for property owners and tenants. They also argue that it will lead to better health outcomes and cite the health concerns associated with gas stoves. Labor unions representing plumbers, pipefitters and operating engineers, along with Peoples Gas, oppose the ordinance, saying that it removes customer choice and would cause job losses. They also warn that customers left on the gas system will end up experiencing higher gas bills.

ILLINOIS RANKED #1 FOR STATE POLICY ON ENERGY DEMOCRACY, UTILITY RESPONSIBILITY

The Institute for Local Self Reliance Governor has ranked Illinois #1 among the 50 states and the District of Columbia for energy democracy and utility accountability. The Institute scored state policies on clean energy action, holding utility companies accountable, protecting ratepayers, and other measures that support locally owned clean energy. The study goes beyond measurements of clean energy output and deployment to examine who owns and controls clean energy production in each state. The Institute also identified Illinois's net-metering and community solar policies as major initiatives that set the state apart.

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

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