

## ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

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May 10, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

*Both chambers of the Illinois General Assembly were in session last week. The Senate will reconvene Monday, May 10 at 4pm, and the House will reconvene Tuesday, May 11 at noon. Friday, May 14 is the deadline to pass substantive legislation out of committees in the opposite chamber. Approximately three weeks remain in the spring legislative session.*

### FY 2022 BUDGET

In addition to considering legislation at the committee level, lawmakers continued private discussions on key topics ahead of the May 31 adjournment deadline. House Democrats brought Republicans to the table to discuss an **FY22 operating budget**. The Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability reported that state revenues have rebounded considerably since this time last year, in addition to \$7.5 billion in federal stimulus funding. With revenue projections better than anticipated, Gov. JB Pritzker is now expressing support for restoring \$350 million to the evidenced-based funding formula for elementary and secondary education. Pritzker faced considerable backlash from the General Assembly for suggesting the state short its funding obligation to schools. The Governor also continues to push to cut \$932 million in business tax incentives. While revenues are outpacing expected performance, House Majority Leader **Greg Harris** (D-Chicago) cautioned that Illinois still faces a projected \$1.4 billion budget deficit for the next fiscal year, in addition to its worst-in-the-nation pension debt of more than \$317 billion.

### 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

### LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

Democratic lawmakers have received a first glimpse at their potential **new legislative districts** after the new maps are drawn. While much work must still be done, Democratic members provided input on their individual districts. If the Senate and the House super-majorities do not come together to agree on a final product prior to the May 31 adjournment deadline, they will have until June 30, 2021 to send a map to the Governor. The House is reportedly considering districts similar to the current map, while the Senate is said to be exploring different boundaries.

### BILLS OF INTEREST

**\*\*\*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.\*\*\***

**Items** still on the legislative horizon include ethics reforms, a scaled-back gaming bill, clean energy legislation, telehealth legislation, housing/rent reforms, cannabis social equity legislation, and legislation to enact an elected Chicago Public School Board.

[Senate Bill 672](#) (Bush/Williams) would limit **third-party delivery apps**, making it illegal for third-party delivery services to post menus for non-affiliated restaurants. SB 672 unanimously passed the Senate.

[Senate Bill 817](#) (Simmons) would withhold funding from schools that apply **dress codes to hairstyles**. School associations and the Illinois State Board of Education are worried that the bill's punishment mechanism goes too far. SB 817 failed to pass out of the Senate Education Committee. Sen. Simmons is hoping to bring the bill back to committee before the end of session.

[Senate Bill 818](#) (Villivalam) would mandate schools to include "comprehensive personal health and safety education and comprehensive **sexual health education**." Under the bill, parents can opt their students out of sex education with no penalty by submitting a written objection. The committee voted to advance SB 818 in an 11-6 vote along partisan lines.

[HB 1063](#) (Ammons/Peters) would eliminate a law that allows for individuals to be charged with "criminal transmission of HIV," and would amend the AIDS Confidentiality Act – a statute that protects Illinoisans from having an HIV-positive status disclosed – to remove exemptions for law enforcement from the provision. Lawmakers in the House voted 90-9 last month to pass the legislation. It passed the Senate Executive Committee 11-4, and now only needs majority support in the Senate to be sent to Gov. Pritzker for his signature.

## 2022 CAMPAIGN UPDATES

U.S. Rep. **Cheri Bustos** (D-Peoria), now in her fifth term, has announced that she will not seek re-election in 2022. Republican **Esther Joy King**, who challenged Bustos with a close race in 2020, had already announced that she will run again.

Mettawa Mayor Casey Urlacher filed paperwork to challenge Senate Minority Leader **Dan McConchie** in the 2022 Republican primary. Urlacher, brother of former Chicago Bears player Brian Urlacher, was pardoned by President Donald Trump in January after he was indicted on sports betting charges.

## COVID-19 & VACCINE UPDATE

Illinois is seeing the lowest number of COVID-19 cases in over a month, as transmission continues to slow. The 7-day case positivity rate is down to 2.8%.

Efforts to reopen Illinois as the pandemic slows are underway. Gov. Pritzker is moving the state into the "**Bridge Phase**" of the Restore Illinois Plan on Friday, May 14, as hospitalization and ICU availability continue to trend slowly downward. This next phase will allow for higher capacity limits and increased business operations. Individuals with proof of full vaccination — defined as 14 days after receiving a final vaccine dose — or a negative COVID-19 test (PCR) one- to three-days prior to an event will not count against capacity limits. More information on what is allowed under the Bridge Phase is posted [here](#).

Full reopening will happen four weeks from May 14 (or June 11) if certain [metrics are met](#). Currently, **55% of Illinois' population age 16+ has received a first dose**. Even once Illinois reopens in Phase 5, state government will continue to monitor all COVID metrics and follow federal guidance, including requiring masks indoors.

The city of Chicago plans to **open up fully by July 4**, potentially opening the door to bigger events and festivals if the city continues to see progress in its COVID-19 numbers. Chicago Mayor **Lori Lightfoot** announced that the **Chicago Auto Show** will return to McCormick Place on July 15 through 19. Attendees will have to register in advance and fill out a health survey, but vaccines will not be required. Lightfoot said that the goal is to have no capacity limits in the city by July 4. As for masks, she said that's "standard fare." The **Donald E. Stephens Convention and Conference Center in Rosemont** also announced that they will resume hosting trade shows and public events in July.

As vaccination numbers slow in Illinois, state officials are offering "**incentives**" to residents to get the **COVID-19 vaccination** -- starting at a shooting facility in Sparta, where those who get COVID-19 shots at the facility also get free targets. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield is offering free admission throughout this month and June to fully vaccinated individuals. The city of Chicago also announced a special series of concerts exclusively for residents who have been fully vaccinated. Gov. Pritzker is announced to expect more announcements for free stuff.

Three major retail pharmacy chains — Walgreens, Walmart and Sam's Club — are offering COVID-19 vaccinations to people who **walk into their stores** without appointments. Vaccine administration has also been expanded to doctors' offices.

### **NEW CANNABIS LOTTERY BILL**

A new plan to create 110 new recreational marijuana retail licenses and expand minority ownership in Illinois has been introduced in Springfield. The new licenses would be in addition to 75 pending licenses that are to be awarded in a lottery for businesses with perfect application scores. A second lottery for 75 new licenses would be held for those scoring 85 percent or better, followed by a third lottery for 35 new licenses intended primarily for Black and Latino majority owners.

### **FEDERAL REAL ID DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MAY 2023**

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White is reminding the public that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has extended the federal REAL ID deadline to **May 3, 2023**. Current Illinois driver's licenses and ID cards will continue to be accepted at airports until that date. In addition, Secretary White has **extended all drivers' license and ID card expiration dates until August 1, 2021**. This extension does not apply to commercial driver's licenses and CDL learner's permits.

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TO SELL THE THOMPSON CENTER**

Gov. Pritzker is moving ahead with plans to sell the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago and is seeking Requests for Proposals to purchase the property. The JRTC has served as the Chicago seat of state government since 1985, housing offices for constitutional officers and the Illinois General Assembly. Information on the RFP can be found at [www.illinois.gov/ThompsonCenter4Sale](http://www.illinois.gov/ThompsonCenter4Sale) and [www.bidbuy.illinois.gov](http://www.bidbuy.illinois.gov).

### **DECLINING IL COMMUNITY COLLEGE ENROLLMENT**

Illinois' community colleges saw **enrollment plunge by 13% this spring**, compared with spring 2020, when the pandemic and schoolwide lockdowns were just beginning, according to research from the National Student Clearinghouse. Total postsecondary enrollment in Illinois dropped by 5.2%, and undergraduate enrollment slid by 7.5%. All three figures are worse than the national average. The spring data mirrors what the Illinois Community College Board reported in fall 2020, when enrollment was down 14% compared with fall 2019. Fall enrollment for Black and Latino students declined about 19%, compared with a 12% decrease for white students.

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

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