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GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL SESSION DELAYED

The Illinois General Assembly's highly anticipated special session to take up issues related to reproductive rights has been postponed, with a possible return in September before the November 8 general election. It is exceedingly difficult to convene and pass legislation during the summer given member schedules and the higher vote requirement – any legislation with an effective date prior to June 1, 2023, will require super majorities in both chambers.

In a statement about postponing the special session, Gov. JB Pritzker and legislative leaders announced that they want to take a more deliberate and careful approach for adding new protections for abortion and other reproductive healthcare rights. One possible piece of legislation being discussed would expand who can perform abortions. Illinois does not currently allow nurse practitioners to perform procedures, but in many other states they do. Gov. Pritzker has said that he would sign such a bill, explaining that it is necessary as more out-of-state patients come to Illinois seeking abortions.

In addition to legislation related to reproductive health, some legislators are also demanding action related to gun safety. The suspect in the July 4 Highland Park shooting admitted to investigators that he fired a "high-powered rifle" from a rooftop – killing seven and wounding dozens more. Illinois officials are calling for federal gun-safety laws to go further than the legislation President Biden signed last week. At the state level, government and law enforcement officials are trying to determine what went wrong and how to address the gun problem in this state. Possible legislation includes limiting purchase and ownership for those under 21 as well as a complete "assault rifle" ban.

On July 5, Gov. Pritzker issued a [Disaster Proclamation](#) in response to the shooting, declaring Lake County a disaster area to assist in recovery efforts.

Both the reproductive health and gun rights issues will play a role in the 2022 Illinois governor's race. Pritzker faces Republican state Sen. Darren Bailey, who is both pro-life (in all circumstances) and an avid gun rights advocate, in the November general election.

Last week, Gov. Pritzker signed the final two bills passed by the General Assembly during the spring 2022 session. He did not veto any of the more than 400 bills that landed on his desk. About a dozen went into effect on July 1.

STATE ENDS FY 2022 WITH ZERO FUND BALANCE

The state's fiscal year ended with a General Funds accounts payable balance of \$1.8 billion and a payment cycle of ZERO days. Illinois is officially caught up with payment on all bills related to K-12 schools, higher education, Medicaid and state insurance, and other government operations and programs.

JUNE 28 PRIMARY ELECTION DEBRIEFS

- ❖ Voter turnout was low – nearly half of what was expected for this type of primary election.
- ❖ The campaign for governor will be ugly. Kicking off his own fall election campaign last week, Gov. Pritzker gave a fiery speech taking direct aim at his Republican opponent Darren Bailey. *“Let me be clear, someone who seeks out and accepts the endorsement of a racist, misogynistic, homophobic, xenophobic, twice impeached former president does not deserve to come anywhere near this state’s highest office,”* Pritzker said. *“Darren Bailey cannot side with the insurrectionists at the Capitol, assert that the 2020 election was stolen, and say that women and their doctors should be jailed for having an abortion even in cases of rape and incest and expect to be handed the keys to the Governor’s Office.”* Bailey took aim at Pritzker, too, starting what is likely to be a war of words in the fall campaign. *“Here’s a tip and some advice for JB Pritzker: start packin,’ friend,”* Bailey said. *“Because on November 8th, you’re fired.”*
- ❖ *“A ballot that’s top-heavy with people viewed as extremists won’t play well in suburban areas, especially among suburban women,”* former Republican Gov. Jim Edgar said in an interview. *“We have to start identifying who can win a primary and a general. Right now, that looks like two different kinds of people.”*
- ❖ Concerning a contested Republican congressional race, former conservative GOP state Rep. Jeanne Ives said, *“Illinois Republicans want somebody who has exhibited courage to stand up to the system and the bureaucrats.”* And Rep. Mary Miller’s victory over Rep. Rodney Davis shows *“Trump’s endorsement means something.”*
- ❖ Illinois House Democrats lost three incumbents to more progressive challengers and will have several swing district members facing national headwinds this fall, regardless of the current state of the GOP in Illinois.

2022 GENERAL ELECTION RACES TO WATCH

- ❖ **Illinois 6th Congressional District:** Orland Park Mayor Keith Pekau is challenging incumbent U.S. Rep. Sean Casten in this suburban district. This district slightly favors Casten.
- ❖ **Illinois 17th Congressional District:** The district covers portions of central, western, and northwestern Illinois. The district leans Democratic and is currently represented by a Democrat, Cheri Bustos, who did not seek reelection. Local meteorologist Eric Sorensen (D) is running against Esther Joy King (R), a lawyer who ran against Bustos in 2020. The district could swing to favor a Republican.
- ❖ **Secretary of State:** State Rep. Dan Brady (R-Bloomington), a moderate downstate Republican lawmaker, and Alexi Giannoulias, a former State Treasurer and Illinois Community College Board chair, will square off this fall in hopes of replacing longtime Secretary of State Jesse White.
- ❖ **Senate 43rd:** After Sen. John Connor decided to run for judge, Eric Mattson was appointed to Connor’s seat, believing his opponent, progressive Will County Board member Rachel Ventura, could put the district on the bubble this November if she won. Ventura won and the Senate Republicans are hoping their candidate, Diane Harris, has a strong chance to flip this seat.
- ❖ **Illinois Supreme Court – 2nd and 3rd Districts:** The Illinois Supreme Court is currently a 4-3 majority Democratic court. In November, with two districts on the ballot, determination of the court’s majority is at play. Expect to see national political parties and interest groups focus their money and attention on these races, as state courts have become the battle ground for abortion rights, redistricting, voting rights, and other partisan political issues.
- ❖ **The above are just a few examples. Additional legislative races to watch this fall will be highlighted in future reports.**

GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT VACANCIES

Since many of the 59 Senate and 118 House seats did not field candidates on both Democrat and Republican primary ballots, both parties have an opportunity to fill vacancies and name a candidate to appear on the November ballot. If no one was nominated at the primary, the local committees can select an individual, who must then get signatures and file with the State Board of Election by July 25. Additionally, new party or independent candidates may file July 5-11.

NEW SENATOR SWORN IN TO REPLACE CROWE

Kris Tharp was sworn in to represent Illinois' 56th Senate District, replacing former Sen. Rachele Aud Crowe, who resigned after she was confirmed as the region's new U.S. Attorney. Tharp is a captain and jail administrator for the Madison County Sheriff's Office with nearly 25 years of law enforcement experience in the Metro East. This will be a highly contested seat in the upcoming general election.

ILLINOIS FAMILY RELIEF PLAN BEGAN JULY 1

On July 1, the [Illinois Family Relief Plan](#) went into effect, providing an estimated \$1.83 billion in relief, including income and property tax rebates and a temporary cut in several sales taxes. The Family Relief Plan includes several tax holidays:

- **Groceries:** The state's 1% sales tax on groceries will be suspended July 1 through June 30, 2023, saving consumers \$400 million.
- **Gas:** The state's normally scheduled increase in the motor fuel tax will be delayed from July 1 to January 2023, saving consumers \$70 million.
- **School supplies:** Sales taxes for qualified clothing and school-related items will be reduced from 6.25% to 1.25% for a 10-day window from August 5 to 14, saving consumers \$50 million.

The plan also includes a permanent expansion of the state's earned income credit from 18% to 20% of the federal credit; property tax rebates for eligible homeowners in an amount equal to the property tax credit they qualified for on their 2021 Illinois tax returns, up to a maximum of \$300; and \$50 income tax rebates for individuals who made less than \$200,000 in 2021. Tax filers will also receive \$100 per dependent they claimed on their 2021 taxes, up to three dependents. The State Comptroller's office expects to issue rebate checks over an eight-week period beginning September 12.

CHICAGO MINIMUM WAGE INCREASED ON JULY 1

Chicago's minimum wage increased by \$0.40 to \$15.40 an hour for workers at the city's large employers with at least 21 employees. For companies with between four and 20 employees, workers must make a minimum of \$14.50 an hour. Domestic workers, including people who work in childcare, housekeeping, and home health services, must make \$15.40 regardless of employer size. The city's minimum wage increases are laid out in its [minimum wage ordinance](#). Until this year, the minimum wage for larger employers in Chicago increased \$1 per year. This year and beyond, the minimum wage increase for large employers is pegged to the Consumer Price Index or 2.5%, whichever is lower.

The state minimum wage in Illinois is \$12; the federal minimum wage sits at \$7.25 and has not increased since 2009.

FIRST BLACK FEMALE JUSTICE SWORN ONTO ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT

Judge Lisa Holder White has officially joined the Illinois Supreme Court as its first Black female justice. Holder White was picked by outgoing Justice Rita Garman as her replacement and then approved by the full court in May. Like Garman, Holder White is a Republican, meaning her appointment will maintain the court's 4-3 Democratic majority.

U.S. SUPREME COURT DECISION ON ENERGY DOES NOT CHANGE ILLINOIS POLICY

A recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling limits federal regulations on reducing carbon emissions, saying that the Environmental Protection Agency cannot take the kind of broad approach the Obama administration had adopted in regulating greenhouse gases from the nation's power plants. The decision put the onus on Congress to give EPA more authority to instituting policies related to climate change. The EPA does not enforce Illinois state law, so the decision is not expected to undermine the Clean Energy Jobs Act, the 2021 law that supposedly puts Illinois on track to reach 100 percent renewable energy by 2050.

AG RAOUL, STATE POLICE LAUNCH TRACING TOOL FOR ILLEGAL GUNS

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul and the Illinois State Police have announced that law enforcement agencies will pool information on guns used in crimes across the state to better track the trafficking of illegal guns. The "Crime Gun Connect" platform makes gun crime records available digitally that, by federal law, are only available in paper form. The database contains more than 100,000 searchable records dating back to 2009. Raoul said that Crime Gun Connect will be a vital tool in Illinois, where most guns used in crimes come from out-of-state. Illinois will be the first state in the nation to compile this information.

DHS IN CONTEMPT OF COURT FOR DELAYING INMATE'S MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

A Sangamon County judge has ruled the state of Illinois was in civil contempt of court for failing to transfer a Sangamon County Jail inmate to a Department of Human Services facility for psychiatric treatment after the inmate was declared unfit April 7. The judge said that Gov. Pritzker's executive order granting DHS Secretary **Grace Hou** unfettered discretion on when to allow admissions of county jail inmates to DHS facilities violates the Illinois Emergency Management Act and cannot be enforced, based on a [November 2020 ruling](#) by the 4th District Appellate Court involving transfers of county jail inmates to state prisons. The judge ordered the state to pay a \$100-per-day fine until the inmate is admitted to DHS.

On July 6, Gov. JB Pritzker extended the executive order at issue, suspending the legal requirement for the state to transfer mentally ill jail inmates into psychiatric care within 20 days. Sangamon County State's Attorney Dan Wright says that he is reviewing the order and weighing his options.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE REBATE PROGRAM OPEN

Illinois' [Electric Vehicle Rebate Program](#), created under the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, is now open. Applications for a \$4,000 rebate in the first funding round are being accepted starting July 1 and must be postmarked on or before September 30, 2022. The next funding round begins July 1, 2026, for a \$2,000 rebate. As of July 1, 2022, the EV Rebate Fund has a balance of \$17,909,043.51.

MAJOR INVESTMENT AT ILLINOIS STATE FAIRGROUNDS

The Illinois Department of Agriculture has kicked off \$58.1 million in capital investments addressing years of deferred maintenance on the historic state fairgrounds. The investment will tackle road projects, new roofs, structural repairs on prominent buildings, and more.

ALEXANDER-CAIRO PORT PROJECT UPDATE

State leaders gathered at the intersection of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers with an update on the Alexander-Cairo port project. State Comptroller Susana Mendoza said that her office has paid out 11 vouchers totaling \$1 million from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and 43 vouchers totaling nearly \$1.7 million from the Illinois Department of Transportation. The next phase of the project will begin sometime later this year.

DUPAGE COUNTY ALLOWS RESIDENTS TO VOTE ANYWHERE

The June 28 primary election was the first time DuPage County residents had the ability to vote at any of the 263 polling places in the county.

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

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