

ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Update

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

January 7, 2021

Preview of 'Lame Duck' Session

Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, D-Chicago, scheduled a **"lame duck" session** to begin tomorrow, January 8, in Springfield. Madigan has indicated the session could last until January 13 -- the day newly elected and incumbent lawmakers will be sworn in at noon for the 102nd General Assembly session -- and "potentially longer." The House has not yet released a calendar for the spring session, although January 14 has been identified as a session day, indicating a possible prolonged battle for House Speaker.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to restrict the Illinois General Assembly's ability to safely meet in-person. Madigan's chief of staff said in an email to lawmakers last week that the House will meet at the Bank of Springfield Center, less than a mile from the State Capitol, with "substantially the same protocols as were followed in May 2020." The Senate will follow suit on a lame duck session and has informed its members to be prepared for a similar schedule. The Senate will meet in the Senate chamber in the Capitol, again with similar protocols as in May.

Much could potentially be considered over the next several days. The most widely anticipated proposals come from the General Assembly's **Legislative Black Caucus**. The Caucus will push a package of bills dealing with criminal-justice reform ([HB 163 SFA2](#)), education and workforce development ([HB 2170 SFA1](#)), economic access and opportunity ([HB 5871](#) / [HB 2685 SFA3](#)), and health care and human services ([HB 5548](#) / [HB 3840 SFA1](#)). All four measures were filed this week, and they are all huge and ambitious omnibus bills. Passage has to happen before the new General Assembly is sworn in on January 13 at noon. The House's bills are brand new bills, which take at least five session days to pass through both chambers. The Senate's are amendments to House bills, which won't take as long to pass. (A summary of HB2710 is attached.)

Also highly anticipated is a **revenue package** to deal with the massive gap in revenue and spending in the current fiscal year due in large part to the budgeted \$5 billion bailout from the federal government that never came. However, with the election of President-elect Joe Biden and Democratic control of both the House and the Senate in Washington DC, the likelihood of federal stimulus money to the state has increased. State lawmakers may punt on the issue of any tax increase and any revenue package may not be as significant as anticipated. House GOP members warn of an impending tax hike, but Democrat leaders have ruled out an income tax increase during lame duck.

Another bill for consideration in lame duck seeks to allow the General Assembly to **conduct business remotely** during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and future emergencies. Sponsored by Rep. Ann Williams (D-Chicago) and Sen. Robert Martwick (D-Chicago), the legislation ([HB 5868](#) / [SB 4030](#)) comes months after a similar measure narrowly failed in the House and just days ahead of the legislature's anticipated return to Springfield.

Committee Schedule – Lane Duck

- House Executive Committee will hold a hearing on 1/8/2021 at 2:00 PM
- House Judiciary - Criminal Committee will hold a hearing on 1/9/2021 at 9:00 AM
- House Higher Education Committee will hold a hearing on 1/9/2021 at 10:00 AM
- House Health Care Availability & Accessibility Committee will hold a hearing on 1/9/2021 at 11:00 AM
- House Judiciary - Civil Committee will hold a hearing on 1/9/2021 at 2:00 PM (SUBJECT MATTER: LaSalle Veterans Home)

Contested Race for House Speaker

The legislative activity during the lame duck session is a precursor to a showdown over who should lead the Illinois House. **Rep. Ann Williams** (D-Chicago) announced yesterday that she is adding her candidacy to become House Speaker. Williams becomes the fourth Democrat to jump in the race, including **Rep. Stephanie Kifowit** (D-Oswego), **Madigan**, and the likely candidacy of **Rep. Kathleen Willis** (D-Addison). All four presented to the House Democratic Women's Caucus yesterday to advocate for their support. The last time there was lack of consensus among the majority party in the House on who to select as speaker was 1974. No challenger to Madigan has a clear path to victory. The Speaker has secured the support of the Black Caucus (21 members) and the Latinx Caucus (although their press release did not include an actual list of Madigan supporters), but with 19 House Democrats continuing to withhold votes from him, Madigan doesn't have a clear path to reelection.

The quandary over the speaker position means the House could be tied up for weeks before the issue is decided. The legislative session cannot begin until a Speaker is chosen.

Legislative Redistricting Begins

The start of the 102nd General Assembly officially kicks off the beginning of a months-long **redistricting** process that will lead to the redrawing of boundaries for Illinois' congressional seats, 59 state Senate seats, and 118 state House seats. As all members of the House and Senate will be up for election in 2022, redistricting will be an important factor in their decision-making process this session. Republicans continue to push for "fair" redistricting maps, and Governor Pritzker reiterated this week he will **veto a partisan map**.

Resignations and Retirements

Since the holiday break, there have been some changes in the make-up of the General Assembly:

- ❖ Outgoing **Senate Republican Leader Bill Brady** has retired from the Senate. He announced after the November election he would be stepping down from as Minority Leader of the Senate. Party leaders in his central Illinois district have not yet selected a replacement. **Rep. Tim Butler** announced he will not seek the appointment.
- ❖ On Monday, **Senator Andy Manar** (D-Bunker Hill) announced he will resign from the Illinois Senate on January 17. He will join Governor JB Pritzker's administration to serve as senior advisor beginning on January 19. Pritzker announced Manar will advise "on a

range of issues, including downstate economic revitalization, appropriations, and COVID-19 recovery efforts.”

- ❖ **Cristina Pacione-Zayas** was sworn-in to the Senate on December 21. She replaces former **Sen. Iris Martinez** (D-Chicago), who is now the Cook County Circuit Court Clerk. Pacione-Zayas was the Secretary of the Illinois State Board of Education and the associate vice president of policy at the Erikson Institute.
- ❖ **Margaret Croke** was sworn in as state representative for the 12th District after outgoing **Rep. Jonathan “Yoni” Pizer** stepped down at the end of December. He is returning to his position as community liaison to Congressman Mike Quigley’s district office (a position he held before he was appointed to the legislature last year).
- ❖ Outgoing **Rep. Allen Skillicorn** (R-Crystal Lake) resigned on January 5 and is moving to Arizona. He was defeated in the November 4 general election by Democrat Suzanne Ness.
- ❖ Former **Senator Chuck Weaver** (R-Peoria), who did not seek reelection in November, announced his retirement early from the conclusion of his term. **Win Stoller** was sworn in on January 5.

Illinois Senate Republican Leadership Team Announced

Incoming Senate Republican Leader Dan McConchie announced some staff changes. Retiring state Senator **Dale Righter** (R-Mattoon) will serve as McConchie’s chief of staff, replacing **Brian Burian**, who will stay on staff in another role. McConchie also hired **Whitney Barnes** as his spokesperson, replacing **Jason Gerwig** who is leaving Senate staff.

McConchie also announced the members of his leadership team for the 102nd General Assembly:

- Sen. Sue Rezin, R-Morris: Deputy Republican Leader
- Sen. Jason Barickman, R-Bloomington: Republican Caucus Chair
- Sen. Donald DeWitte, R-St. Charles: Assistant Republican Leader
- Sen. Steve McClure, R-Springfield: Assistant Republican Leader
- Sen. Jason Plummer, R-Edwardsville: Assistant Republican Leader
- Sen. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet: Assistant Republican Leader
- Sen. Dave Syverson, R-Rockford: Republican Caucus Whip
- Sen. Jil Tracy, R-Quincy: Republican Caucus Whip

COVID-19 Update & Vaccines

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) today reported 8,757 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Illinois, including 177 additional deaths. Illinois has now reported more than **one million cases** since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, including 17,272 deaths. Within the past 24 hours, laboratories have reported 105,518 specimens for a total 13,803,946. As of last night, 3,921 in Illinois were reported to be in the hospital with COVID-19. Of those, 783 patients were in the ICU and 450 patients with COVID-19 were on ventilators. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from December 31, 2020 – January 6, 2021 is 8.5%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from December 31, 2020 – January 6, 2021 is 9.8%.

All information pertaining to the Coronavirus Response from the Governor's office and agencies can be found [here](#). DCEO regularly updates its [Frequently Asked Questions document \(available via this link\)](#).

Mitigations could begin easing starting January 15 as regions across the state continue to make progress controlling and reducing the spread of COVID-19. In order for a region to move back to Tier 2 mitigations, a region must experience less than 12 percent test positivity rate for three consecutive days AND greater than 20 percent available intensive care unit (ICU) and hospital bed availability AND declining COVID hospitalizations in 7 out of the last 10 days. Tier 2 does not allow for indoor dining.

Pritzker Extends Mask Mandate through Early June

Governor JB Pritzker's office filed an emergency rule with the state to extend the state's mask mandate until June 3. The original mask mandate, which took effect in May, expired on January 3. A new emergency rule was filed on January 4 and is in effect for 150 days. The language of the proposed emergency rule has not yet been released.

IDPH COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution

On December 22, IDPH officials provided legislative members of the Restore Illinois Collaborative Commission an update on the current version of the state's COVID-19 vaccination distribution plan, including a preview upcoming phases of distribution.

During his presentation, IDPH Deputy Director of the Office of Preparedness & Response Andrew Friend explained Illinois is currently vaccinating **Group 1A**, which includes all individuals who work in health care settings who may indirectly or directly come in contact with patients, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

Yesterday, Pritzker announced **Group 1B**, the next group to be vaccinated, building on guidance from the CDC and IDPH. Group 1B will include all Illinois residents age 65 years and older and "frontline essential workers," as outlined by the CDC. In order to reduce COVID-19 mortality and limit community spread in Black and Brown communities, Illinois **reduced the age eligibility in Group 1B by 10 years** from CDC's recommendation.

The frontline essential workers designation includes first responders; educators; manufacturing, distribution and agriculture workers (including grocery store workers); United States Postal Service workers; public transit employees; corrections workers and incarcerated people, and others. All in all, Phase 1B totals approximately **3.2 million Illinoisans**. [View Phases 1A and 1B here](#).

Group 1C currently includes individuals between ages 16 and 54 with high risk-conditions or co-morbidities like heart disease. The CDC is still trying to determine who exactly falls into which group. Friend emphasized different areas of the state will move from phase 1A into phases 1B

and 1C at different times depending on the makeup of that specific community and the uptake rate of those individuals being vaccinated.

Illinois Loosens Qualifications to Allow EMTs to Give Vaccines

IDPH [issued a proclamation](#) allowing EMTs to administer the flu and COVID-19 vaccines to persons over the age of 6 after successful completion of an IDPH-approved vaccine training program and as authorized by the EMS Medical Director for the jurisdiction where vaccinations are being administered.

EMTs can only administer the vaccines when they are (1) acting under the authorization of the EMS Medical Director for their respective jurisdiction; (2) responding to a request for assistance from a certified local health department or hospital and; (3) working under the direction of IEMA and IDPH, an IEMA-certified emergency services and disaster agency, or a certified local health department that is enrolled in IDPH's immunization program and operating pursuant to a vaccine provider agreement with IDPH.

36th Veteran Death at LaSalle, VFW Calls for Resignations

A total of 36 residents have now died at the LaSalle Veterans' Home since a COVID-19 outbreak struck the home in early November. A group of veterans' advocates from around the state are calling on Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Linda Chapa LaVia and her Chief of Staff, Anthony Kolbeck, to resign or for Governor Pritzker to fire them.

Free Statewide Broadband Access Could Cost More Than \$3 Billion Per Year

Providing free broadband Internet access to every Illinois household would cost between \$3.3 billion and \$4.2 billion each year, according to a new report set to be presented to the Illinois General Assembly. In late December, the [Illinois Broadband Advisory Council](#) was presented with the findings of an affordability study required by [SB 2135](#), a measure approved by the legislature in May. The study, which is still in draft form but was due to the General Assembly on January 1, examined the cost of providing universal broadband to Illinoisans, as well as estimating the cost of providing "affordable" access to all residents.

Cannabis Expungements & Pardons

Thousands of pardons were issued for low-level cannabis convictions and nearly half a million non-felony cannabis-related arrest records have been expunged. Gov. Pritzker's office said the Governor issued pardons for **9,129 low-level cannabis conviction records**; the arrest records have been expunged by the Illinois State Police. The expungement of all **492,192 cannabis arrest records** on New Year's Eve means ISP has completed its automatic expungement process four years early; its statutory deadline is Jan. 1, 2025. Expungement has been completed at the state level, but the process continues in most of the state's 102 counties, which have until Jan. 1, 2025.

Cannabis License Dispute to be Heard by Illinois Supreme Court

The case between **Curative Health Cultivation LLC** and **Medponics Illinois LLC** is expected to be heard by the Illinois Supreme Court early in 2021. The license in question, issued in 2015 and

among the last of its kind to be disputed in court, would enable the production of large amounts of marijuana for medical and recreational uses, making it more lucrative than more recent and restrictive permits.

New Director Appointed to Illinois Department of Insurance

Dana Popish Severinghaus will serve as Director of the Illinois Department of Insurance. Popish Severinghaus was formerly Legislative and Regulatory Counsel at Allstate Insurance Company, where she advised Allstate and its subsidiaries on legal, regulatory and legislative matters across the Midwest. Before that, she served as Senior Policy Advisor at the State of Illinois in Central Management Services where she saw oversaw the Bureau of Benefits. Prior to that, Popish Severinghaus served as the Director of Government Relations for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois. Popish Severinghaus takes over for **Shannon Whalen**, who was named interim acting director last month. Whalen took over after **Robert Muriel** exited the post.

IDES Preparing to Administer New Federal COVID-19 Relief Legislation

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) announced it remains committed to implementing newly announced federal unemployment benefits and relief measures as quickly and effectively as possible. President Trump signed the omnibus spending bill, H.R. 133, on December 27. Included in the bill were critical extensions to the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), and Extended Benefits (EB) programs. The new legislation includes an option for states to implement the **Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation** (MEUC) program. Illinois and IDES plan to adopt the MEUC program, which addresses mixed-income earners who have self-employment income but are disqualified from receiving PUA because they are eligible to receive regular unemployment benefits. Claimants are encouraged to check the [IDES website](#) and social media platforms for additional updates.

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January 25, 2021

New Leadership in the Illinois House

State Rep. Emanuel “Chris” Welch, the new speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, has promised to make some changes to the way the Speaker’s office operates. For one, Welch is adept at using social media and has committed to modernizing the office. He has also committed to ethics reforms and supports a law limiting leader terms to 10 years. One of the biggest areas for change is the upcoming legislative and congressional district reapportionment. Under former Speaker Michael Madigan, the process was partisan and handled behind closed doors. Governor JB Pritzker has promised not to sign an “unfair” map. Welch has been a supporter of “fair” maps in the past but acknowledged that his version of “fair” might not be the same as others.

Welch’s first order of business is to announce the rules of the Illinois House. Welch has made it clear he wants more of a collaborative approach by conferring with his colleagues on both sides of the aisle. He also promised a leadership team that will show the state’s diversity of gender, race, and geography. Welch’s leadership team includes:

- State Rep. Greg Harris - Majority Leader
- State Rep. Jehan Gordon-Booth - Deputy Majority Leader / Speaker Pro-Tempore
- State Rep. Mary E. Flowers - Deputy Majority Leader and Dean of the Caucus
- State Rep. Jaime M. Andrade, Jr. - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Robyn Gabel - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Elizabeth Hernandez - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Jay Hoffman - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Natalie Manley - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Marcus C. Evans, Jr. - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Delia Ramirez - Assistant Majority Leader
- State Rep. Carol Ammons - Democratic Conference Chair

In addition to these leadership posts, Welch tapped leaders within each caucus of the House Democrats to serve as caucus whips. These members will rally the various caucuses around legislation and issues of importance to the entire Democratic Caucus. This team will be:

- State Rep. Will Guzzardi - Progressive Caucus Whip
- State Rep. Kam Buckner - Black Caucus Whip
- State Rep. Theresa Mah - Asian Caucus Whip
- State Rep. Larry Walsh, Jr. - Downstate Caucus Whip
- State Rep. Deb Conroy - Women’s Caucus Whip
- State Rep. Aaron Ortiz - Latinx Caucus Whip

Four representatives who held leadership positions under former Speaker Madigan are out: Kelly Burke, who plans to run for mayor of Evergreen Park; Will Davis and Fred Crespo, who weren’t elected out of the Black and Latino caucuses to serve in leadership, and Kathleen Willis. Representatives moving up are Jaime Andrade, Delia Ramirez, Marcus Evans Jr., Robyn Gabel, and Carol Ammons.

Madigan is expected to resign from the 22nd District House seat he’s held since 1971. He has offered some simple advice to Welch: “trust his instinct.” In addition to packing up his office, multiple sources report that Madigan has already moved some of his personal belongings out of his longtime Springfield apartment – fueling

the expectation he could resign. It is still unknown if Madigan will keep his role as state chair of the Democratic Party of Illinois, but Welch has said he is not interested in the role if it opens.

COVID at the Capitol/BOS Center

Some lawmakers, their staffs, and political reporters will be quarantining for two weeks upon leaving Springfield as there have been multiple reports of post-session positive Covid-19 cases. Certain individuals in the Senate complex have been advised to quarantine, and anyone at the Bank of Springfield Center on Thursday, the first day of the 102nd Illinois General Assembly, has been advised to do the same, according to a statement that a positive Covid-19 case has been reported in both locations.

Update on the Illinois Senate

The Illinois Senate has adopted its operating rules for the 102nd General Assembly. A new rule will allow a bill to be considered before multiple committees. While it's unclear how this provision will function during the legislative process at this time, according to the new rule, a bill must pass all committees to which it is assigned to advance to the floor for final action.

The Senate also created several new standing committees, while eliminating others. New committees include a combined Appropriations Committee; Behavioral and Mental Health; Ethics (Formerly Government Accountability and Ethics); Commerce (formerly Commerce and Economic Development); Health; Healthcare Access and Availability; Human Rights; Public Safety; Redistricting; and Tourism and Hospitality. Committees eliminated include: Appropriations I and Appropriations II, Human Services, Public Health, and Telecommunications and Information Technology. The single Appropriation Committee is expected to create 12 subject-area subcommittees.

President Harmon also announced his Senate Democrat Leadership Team:

- State Sen. Kimberly Lightford – Majority Leader
- State Sen. Bill Cunningham – President Pro Tempore
- State Sen. Emil Jones, III – Deputy Majority Leader
- State Sen. Laura Murphy – Deputy Majority Leader
- State Sen. Jacqueline Collins – Assistant Majority Leader
- State Sen. Linda Holmes – Assistant Majority Leader
- State Sen. David Koehler – Assistant Majority Leader
- State Sen. Antonio Munoz – Assistant Majority Leader
- State Sen. Mattie Hunter – Majority Caucus Chair
- State Sen. Omar Aquino – Majority Caucus Whip
- State Sen. Napoleon Harris, III – Majority Caucus Whip
- State Sen. Michael Hastings – Majority Caucus Whip
- State Sen. Julie Morrison – Majority Caucus Whip

Senate Committee Chairs for the 102nd General Assembly:

<u>Senate Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>
Agriculture	Senator Patrick Joyce
Appropriations	Senator Elgie Sims Jr.
Assignments	Senator Kimberly A. Lightford
Behavioral and Mental Health	Senator Laura Fine
Commerce	Senator Suzy Glowiak Hilton
Criminal Law	Senator John Connor

Education	Senator Christopher Belt
Energy and Public Utilities	Senator Michael E. Hastings
Environment and Conservation	Senator Melinda Bush
Ethics	Senator Ann Gillespie
Executive Appointments	Senator Laura Murphy
Executive	Senator Cristina Castro
Financial Institutions	Senator Laura Ellman
Health	Senator Julie Morrison
Healthcare Access and Availability	Senator Patricia Van Pelt
Higher Education	Senator Scott M. Bennett
Human Rights	Senator Celina Villanueva
Insurance	Senator Napoleon Harris, III
Judiciary	Senator Rachelle Crowe
Labor	Senator Linda Holmes
Licensed Activities	Senator Emil Jones, III
Local Government	Senator Steve Stadelman
Pensions	Senator Robert F. Martwick
Public Safety	Senator Robert Peters
Redistricting	Senator Omar Aquino
Revenue	Senator Heather A. Steans**
State Government	Senator Steven M. Landek
Tourism and Hospitality	Senator Sara Feigenholtz
Transportation	Senator Ram Villivalam
Veterans Affairs	Senator Thomas Cullerton

**This list is already out of date. Sen. Heather Steans, who has served in the legislature since 2008, has announced her resignation, which will take effect at the end of this month. State Rep. Kelly Cassidy is interested in being appointed to fill that Senate vacancy. Appointments to fill the vacancies of former Sen. Andy Manar and former Minority Leader Bill Brady remain unfilled, although Brady's replacement could be selected as early as this week.

The Senate was currently scheduled to return to Springfield on January 26, but it has already cancelled session, citing the challenges of legislating in the midst of a pandemic. The House is still scheduled to return on February 2. It is likely session days will continue to be canceled due to the pandemic, particularly in light of the announced COVID-19 positive cases at the BOS Center and the Capitol Complex. Senate President Don Harmon said in a statement: "Much of the early part of any legislative session is devoted to organizational efforts and committee hearings. The Senate's remote committee rules mean we could manage to accomplish much of this remotely while working our way through the vaccine protocols like everyone else."

Key Session Dates

Below is a listing of key dates for the 2021 spring session. The Governor's traditional State of the State Address has been combined with the Budget Address, which will be delivered on February 17.

2021 Key Session Dates:

January 29 - House Legislative Reference Bureau Request Deadline
February 5 - Senate Legislative Reference Bureau Request Deadline
February 11 - Deadline: Introduction of Substantive House Bills
February 17 - Governor's State of the State/Budget Address

February 19 - Deadline: Introduction of Substantive Senate Bills
February 23 - Consolidated Primary Election
March 26 - Deadline: Substantive Bills out of Committee - Both Chambers
March 29 - April 9 Spring Break
April 6 - Consolidated Election
April 23 - Deadline: Third Reading Substantive Bills - Both Chambers
May 14 - Deadline: Substantive Bills out of Committee in Opposite Chamber - Both Chambers
May 28 - Deadline: Third Reading Substantive Bills - Both Chambers
May 31 - Adjournment

Although Illinois lawmakers sent 23 bills to the Governor during lame duck session, several other proposals failed to clear both chambers. Many of the proposals are likely to be reconsidered in the new General Assembly. For example, Representative Lilly has already introduced the Black Caucus healthcare agenda in the form of [HB 158](#) and [HB 159](#). Healthcare was the only Black Caucus pillar not to be approved.

With the 102nd General Assembly upon us, new bill introductions have begun, and legislators and advocacy groups are establishing their legislative agendas for the 2021 spring session.

State Budget

President Joe Biden's nearly \$2 trillion pandemic relief proposal includes more stimulus checks and help for the unemployed, as well as \$350 billion for cities and states whose budgets have been pummeled by the loss of tax revenue. Gov. Pritzker is hopeful the stimulus package will pass. He also claims to have a commitment from Illinois' legislative leaders to take up his "decoupling" bill in the regular session. Shoring up the budget hole in the current fiscal year remains a priority.

COVID-19 Update & Regional Metrics

The Illinois Department of Public Health reported 7,042 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease in Illinois last Friday, including 95 additional deaths. Currently, IDPH is reporting a total of 1,093,375 cases, including 18,615 deaths. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from January 15–21 is 5.0%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from January 15–21 is 6.2%.

Last Friday IDPH began adjusting the reporting of probable cases, which caused an artificial one-day increase in cases of 1,903. That count now includes both confirmed and probable cases. Confirmed deaths and probable deaths will still be reported separately.

Last fall, the positivity rate peaked at 13.2 percent on a rolling average as of Nov. 13, and the entire state entered strict Tier 3 mitigations on Nov. 20. Since then, the positivity rate has been on a continual downward trend except for the two weeks following Christmas day, when it rose from just under 7 percent to over 8.5 percent before beginning to fall again.

All information pertaining to the Coronavirus Response from the Governor's office and agencies can be found [here](#). The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity regularly updates its [Frequently Asked Questions document \(available via this link\)](#).

IDPH and the Chicago Department of Public Health have announced the state's first case of the SARS-CoV-2 variant B.1.1.7 first identified in the United Kingdom.

Last Friday, Gov. Pritzker unfroze all of Illinois' 11 regions from the Tier 3 coronavirus mitigations implemented statewide in November as the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic raged. The Governor also announced adjustments to the resurgence mitigations in light of ramped-up vaccination efforts across the state and increased hospital staffing, with Tier 1 of the resurgence mitigation plan now allowing restaurants and bars in a qualifying region to resume indoor dining with limited capacity. Youth and recreational sports may also resume play following the IDPH All Sports Policy for all regions moving out of Tier 3.

1. Region 1 (North-West): Tier 1 mitigations
2. Region 2 (North-Central): Tier 1 mitigations
3. Region 3 (West-Central): Phase 4
4. Region 4 (Metro East): Tier 2 mitigations
5. Region 5 (Southern): Phase 4
6. Region 6 (East-Central): Phase 4
7. Region 7 (South Suburban – Kankakee & Will): Tier 1 mitigations
8. Region 8 (West Suburban – DuPage & Kane): Tier 2 mitigations
9. Region 9 (North Suburban – Lake & McHenry): Tier 2 mitigations
10. Region 10 (Suburban Cook): Tier 2 mitigations
11. Region 11 (Chicago): Tier 2 mitigations

* If metrics continue to improve or are stable, regions 10 and 11 are on track to advance to [Tier 1](#) on Saturday, January 23, 2021.

In order to move to **Tier 2** mitigations, a region must meet the following metrics:

1. A test positivity rate below 12 percent for three consecutive days, as measured by the 7-day rolling average; AND
2. Greater than or equal to 20 percent available staffed ICU and medical/surgical hospital beds for three consecutive days, on a 3-day rolling average; AND
3. A sustained decrease in the number of people in the hospital with COVID-19 for seven out of 10 days, on a 7-day average.

In order to move to **Tier 1** mitigations, a region must meet the following metrics:

1. A test positivity rate below 8 percent for three consecutive days, as measured by the 7-day rolling average; AND
2. Greater than or equal to 20 percent available staffed ICU and medical/surgical hospital beds for three consecutive days, on a 3-day rolling average; AND
3. No sustained increase in the number of people in the hospital with COVID-19 for seven out of 10 days, on a 7-day average.

In order to move to **Phase 4**, a region must meet the following metrics:

1. A test positivity rate less than or equal to 6.5 percent for three consecutive days, as measured by the 7-day rolling average; AND
2. Greater than or equal to 20 percent available staffed ICU and medical/surgical hospital beds for three consecutive days, on a 3-day rolling average; AND
3. No sustained increase in the number of people in the hospital with COVID-19 for seven out of 10 days, on a 7-day average.

The key change to the state's Restore Illinois Mitigation Plan is resuming indoor dining with capacity limits in Tier 1. Restaurants and bars in Regions in Tier 1 can open indoor dining, with capacity limited to the lesser of 25 people or 25 percent of room capacity. Additionally, establishments must serve food, and indoor tables must be

limited to no more than four people, with reservations limited to two hours. Outdoor dining regulations across the [resurgence plan](#) and Phase 4 remain unchanged.

Below are four documents provided by the Governor's Office.

- [Tier 2 Resurgence Mitigation 1 Pager](#)
- [Tier 1 Resurgence Mitigation 1 Pager](#)
- [Sports Guidance](#)
- [IL Vaccine Administration Plan](#)

Additionally, the following IDPH webpage <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=1> provides daily updates on key regional metrics.

COVID-19 VACCINES

In accordance with local progress, IDPH has permitted local health departments who have already substantially vaccinated their 1A populations to move forward with 1B in order to leave no vaccine on the shelves. While vaccine shipments from the federal government remains limited, the state is aggressively building out its capacity. Hundreds of public vaccination sites opened across the state this week. In addition to local health department clinics, vaccines may be available at retail pharmacy chains, Illinois National Guard mobile sites, state-run mass vaccination clinics, hospitals and urgent care locations, doctors' offices, and large employers. Phase 1B will begin statewide with limited distribution today (January 25), though some areas of the state which have "substantially" completed the first phase have already started with Phase 1B.

As of last night, 922,325 doses of vaccine have been delivered to providers in Illinois, including Chicago. In addition, approximately 524,050 doses have been allocated to the federal government's Pharmacy Partnership Program for long-term care facilities. This brings the total Illinois doses to 1,446,375. IDPH is currently reporting a total of 616,677 vaccines administered, including 93,683 for long-term care facilities. The 7-day rolling average of vaccines administered daily is 24,190 doses.

One issue during the first phase of vaccinations has been that health systems could only vaccinate health care workers. If they couldn't inoculate enough health care workers quickly, they didn't want to hold on to doses that others might be able to use. As a result, a number of Chicago-area hospital systems have declined offers of additional vaccine shipments in recent weeks. For example, NorthShore University HealthSystem, which has six hospitals in Chicago and the suburbs, said "no thanks" to a batch of doses earlier this month because it was busy administering second doses to employees.

Another challenge in the first phase was that many people were hesitant to get the vaccine — an issue that's likely to carry over to the next phase.

Illinois National Guard Activated to Springfield and Washington, D.C.

Two weeks, Gov. Pritzker activated 250 members of the Illinois National Guard in response to the warnings issued by the FBI regarding threats to state capital cities in the days leading up to the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden. Our state public safety agencies, including the Illinois State Police, Secretary of State Police, and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency, worked in tandem with their local and federal counterparts to protect the residents of Illinois while safeguarding the right to peaceful protest. At the request of the U.S. Department of Defense, the Governor also activated an additional 100 members of the Illinois National Guard in support of the 59th Presidential Inauguration in Washington D.C. These additional troops joined the approximately 200 members of the Guard that were previously activated by the Governor.

Only a handful of protesters appeared in Springfield.

IBHE Approves Higher Education Budget Request Focused on Equity

The Illinois Board of Higher Education has approved a Fiscal Year 2022 budget that increases funding to support its continuing efforts to help close equity gaps in higher education outcomes. The budget proposal is \$2.141 billion and would reflect a 4.5 percent (\$92 million) increase for general funds, excluding the State University Retirement System. The budget recommendation next goes to Gov. Pritzker and the General Assembly for consideration.

Budget highlights that focus on equity include:

- \$50 million increase for MAP
- \$5.3 million (2 percent) increase for community colleges
- \$23.2 million (2 percent) increase for public universities
- \$1 million for roll-out of the Common App
- Maintained funding for AIM HIGH, which is a merit-based scholarship program for public universities
- \$10 million toward financial stability for College Illinois!

Gaming Operations Resume

Casino gambling and video gaming licensees in regions that exited Tier 3 Resurgence Mitigations on January 15 were allowed to resume operations beginning at 8 AM on Saturday, January 16. They continue to be subject to [Tier 1 and Tier 2 Mitigations](#).

IDNR to Reopen Select Historic Sites

Last Friday the Illinois Department of Natural Resources announced that select state historic sites will reopen to the public effective Tuesday, Jan. 26. All sites open to the public will return to staffing levels prior to their closure. Sites in regions 4 and 7 of the Restore Illinois plan will remain closed until further notice.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

January 14, 2021

The Illinois House returned to Springfield on Friday, and the Senate convened on Sunday for a lame duck session. The primary objectives were to consider: 1) a legislative agenda from the Black Caucus proposals to address systemic racism, and 2) the fight for House Speaker.

The legislature ultimately passed an omnibus **education** bill focused on improving access to quality early-through-post-secondary education for Black and Brown students; four **economic equity** bills that addressed more requirements to the state procurement process to promote contracts with Black-owned businesses, conviction records in hiring and employment actions, housing information on criminal history, racial disparities among various industries, and predatory lending; and a **criminal justice reform** bill eliminating cash bail while prohibiting chokeholds and requiring additional police records and body cameras. The 101st General Assembly adjourned before considering the **healthcare** omnibus bill.

Other bills approved by the General Assembly included a trial-lawyer-backed measure adding **pre-judgment interest** to personal injury cases, expanding the **Chicago Teachers Union's collective bargaining issues**, and amending the **hospital transformation program**. One bill, [Senate Bill 1199](#), that did not pass was the Governor's request to **decouple** the state from some federal tax credits, which he believed would generate \$500 million but could be closer to \$1 billion. Opponents argued the tax incentives were part of the federal COVID relief program and should not be taken away from taxpayers. No action was taken on renewable energy, ethics, or remote legislating.

All bills passing both houses now go Governor Pritzker for his approval. Any bill that did not pass is now dead. The new 102nd General Assembly, inaugurated into office yesterday, begins its spring session and will introduce all new bills in the coming weeks. Democrats lose one vote in the House but still maintain a strong majority of 73-45, while Senate Democrats add to their majority of 41-18.

HOUSE SPEAKER

House Democrats endured the pressure of selecting a Speaker to lead their caucus and the House chamber this week. Speaker Michael Madigan celebrated the 50th anniversary of his election to the General Assembly -- and his 38th anniversary of becoming Speaker -- by making his case to his colleagues to remain in charge. The four announced candidates (Speaker Madigan, Rep. Stephanie Kifowit, Rep. Kathleen Willis, and Rep. Ann Williams) all pitched to the Democrat caucus and laid out their respective strategies and proposals. Before the first private vote was taken, Rep. Willis withdrew her candidacy.

After the first vote, sources report Madigan fell shorter than expected of the 60 votes needed. Madigan received 51 votes, Williams received 18 votes, Kifowit received 3 votes, and one member voted present. The House Democrat Women's caucus and several other women organizations soon announced they supported a female speaker, giving Williams another boost. The next morning (Monday morning), Speaker Madigan announced he was suspending his bid for Speaker, but not withdrawing. Many viewed this move as another calculated ploy.

The House Black Caucus then put forward their choice to run for Speaker – Rep. Emanuel “Chris” Welch (D-Hillside). Rep. Jay Hoffman (D-Swansea) also opted to jump in the race. Before the next round of voting, Rep. Williams and Rep. Kifowit dropped out. The second round of voting resulted in 50 votes for Welch, 15 votes for Hoffman, and 7 present votes (including Speaker Madigan). The vote was held shortly after opposition research surfaced detailing one charge of domestic violence 19 years ago and two sexual harassment lawsuits filed against Welch in 2010 and 2011.

Yesterday morning, the Democratic Caucus met and voted a third time. Welch improved his standing to 55 votes, 17 voted present, and one didn’t vote. With the fourth vote, Welch clinched the title of Speaker of the Illinois House with 69 votes – the first Black Speaker in Illinois. Welch has served in the House since 2013. He is an attorney from Westchester, member of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, past chair of the House Higher Education Committee, and most recently chair of the House Executive Committee. We will learn in the coming days about Welch’s plan for House Democrat leadership, staff structure, rules, committees, and session calendar.

House Speaker Michael J. Madigan released the following statement Wednesday:

“As I prepare to pass the Speaker’s gavel to a new generation of Democratic leadership, I want to thank the people of my district and the members of the House Democratic Caucus for the faith and trust they have placed in me over the years. I want to thank my staff for their hard work on behalf of every member of this caucus. It has been the honor of a lifetime to help bring people of different experiences and backgrounds together to serve our state.

“It is time for new leadership in the House. I wish all the best for Speaker-elect Welch as he begins a historic speakership. It is my sincere hope today that the caucus I leave to him and to all who will serve alongside him is stronger than when I began. And as I look at the large and diverse Democratic majority we have built—full of young leaders ready to continue moving our state forward, strong women and people of color, and members representing all parts of our state—I am confident Illinois remains in good hands.”

The House formally held elections for leadership on the House floor. All Democrats elected Welch as Speaker of the Illinois House, and all Republicans selected Jim Durkin as Minority Leader. In his acceptance speech, Speaker Welch pledged for unity in moving the state forward and acknowledged the legacy of former Speaker Madigan.

The Senate elected Don Harmon to serve as President of the Illinois Senate and Dan McConchie to serve as Minority Leader.

As of January 13, all previous legislation is “dead,” and all bills will be introduced as new legislation. Important dates to remember:

- The LRB request deadline for drafting new bills is **February 5**.
- The deadline for introducing new bills in the Senate is **February 19**.
- The Governor’s combined State of the State/Budget Address is scheduled for **February 17**.

As we move into the 102nd General Assembly, we do so with threats of “armed protests” at our State Capitol and to “storm” government offices in every state on President-elect Joe Biden’s inauguration day. Security measures have intensified around the Capitol and the BOS Center.

BILLS CONSIDERED DURING LAME DUCK

Passed Both Houses

[House Bill 156](#) by Representative Mike Zalewski (D) extends the Transportation Network Providers Act.

[House Bill 570](#) by Representative Jay Hoffman (D) deals with TIF extensions.

[House Bill 2275](#) by Senator Bill Cunningham allows Chicago Teachers Union to include length of work day and year in collective bargaining and removes impasse procedures.

[House Bill 1559](#) by Senator Bill Cunningham (D), a trailer bill to HB 2275, returns the length of school day and year to permissive collective bargaining for the Chicago Teachers Union.

Education Pillar [House Bill 2170](#) by Senator Kim Lightford (D) focuses on improving the education of minority students, including creating new programs to support early childhood education, creating a task force to support equitable environments in Illinois schools, revising the state's standards for high school students, establishing a six-week summer program to help students in poverty, and enhancing programs to keep Black students from leaving the state to go to college.

[House Bill 2451](#) by Senator Robert Martwick (D) enhances Chicago firefighter pension benefits.

[House Bill 2461](#) by Representative Jay Hoffman (D) deals with land transfers for Bensenville, Springfield, Will County, Northern Illinois University, a public child care facility.

[House Bill 2488](#) by Representative Mike Zalewski (D) allows for electronic health record systems to gain access to the Illinois Prescription Monitoring Program.

[House Bill 3360](#) by Representative Jay Hoffman (D) allows the plaintiff to recover prejudgment interest on all damages in personal injury cases.

Criminal Justice Pillar [House Bill 3653](#) by Representative Justin Slaughter (D) represents the criminal justice omnibus bill from the Black Caucus, ending cash bail in 2023, creating statewide use of force standards, changing incarcerated populations, and addressing decertification.

[House Bill 3878](#) by Representative Terra Costa Howard (D) allows alcohol to be served on trains (Amtrak).

[House Bill 4276](#) by Representative Jay Hoffman (D) an agreed bill, extends sunset of workers’ compensation laws providing for rebuttal presumption and pension benefits for COVID.

[Senate Bill 54](#) by Senator Sara Feigenholtz (D) allows for home delivery of alcohol.

[Senate Bill 1510](#) by Senator Heather Steans (D) mandates the Department of Healthcare and Family Services to establish a health care transformation program to create innovative partnerships funded by the transformation pool (annual funding of \$150 million), an agreed bill through the Medicaid Working Group. The bill also requires insurance companies to cover routine COVID diagnostic testing at nursing facilities without utilizations management, which was not included in the agreed language by the working group but was initiated by the nursing home industry.

[Senate Bill 1530](#) by Senator Chris Belt (D) extends classification of a “safety-net” hospital to those qualified beginning October 1, 2012.

Economic Pillar

- [Senate Bill 1480](#) by Senator Chris Belt (D) creates a civil rights violation for any employer for using a conviction record as a basis to refuse to hire or any action for recruitment, hiring, promotion, renewal of employment, selection for training or apprenticeship, discharge, discipline, tenure or terms, privileges, or conditions of employment. The bill requires businesses to obtain an equal pay registration certificate and submit Employer Information Reports.
- [Senate Bill 1608](#) by Senator Chris Belt (D) specifies further requirements in the awarding of State contracts concerning diversity and underrepresented groups.
- [Senate Bill 1792](#) by Senator Chris Belt (D) addresses racial disparities among the agriculture, beauty supply, and cannabis industries and caps predatory payday loan rates.
- [Senate Bill 1980](#) by Senator Chris Belt (D) requires housing authorities to collect information concerning the denial of assistance on the basis criminal history records.

[Senate Bill 1805](#) by Cristina Castro (D) allows transfers for Metropolitan Water Reclamation District.

[Senate Bill 2527](#) by Senator Patricia Van Pelt (D) authorizes quitclaim deed for property in Cook County.

[Senate Bill 2779](#) by Senator Linda Holmes (D) changes districts for Fox Valley Park District.

[House Resolution 866](#) by Representative Andre Thapedi (D) calls for an equitable land-use plan that directs funding toward low-income communities for infrastructure, housing, and other economic development.

[House Resolution 696](#) by Representative Carol Ammons (D) calls on Congress to recognize student debt as a crisis.

Passed One Chamber (Now Dead)

[House Bill 97](#) by Senator Rachelle Crowe (D) allows the Supreme Court to employ security officers.

[House Bill 122](#) by Representative Jehan Gordon-Booth (D) deals with cannabis employment and licensing. *Passed Senate*

[House Bill 356](#) by Representative Joyce Mason (D) gives nurses training credit for on-the-job experience during COVID. *Passed Senate*

[House Bill 471](#) by Senator Julie Morrison (D) allows board of directors of a corporation to vote remotely for shareholder meeting. *Passed Senate*

[House Bill 1653](#) by Senator Omar Aquino (D) mandates the Department of Healthcare and Family Services to establish a health care transformation program to create innovative partnerships funded by the transformation pool (annual funding of \$150 million), an agreed bill through the Medicaid Working Group. *Passed Senate*

[House Bill 2263](#) by Senator Ann Gillespie (D) requires seclusion rooms and isolated time-outs and restraints in school be used appropriately and creates reporting and oversight on use. *Passed Senate*

[House Bill 3393](#) by Senator Sara Feigenholtz (D) offers COVID recovery provisions for hospitality. *Passed Senate*

Healthcare Pillar [House Bill 3840](#) by Senator Mattie Hunter (D) contains provisions on provider implicit bias, requires the Department on Aging to develop a dementia training program, reduces blood sugar testing materials to a 1 percent sales tax, requires nursing homes and hospitals to test water for Legionella, provides \$50 million annually to safety-net hospitals to enhance OB/GYN services, creates a new racial impact note on every bill, creates a Health and Human Services Task Force to undertake review of programs to improve health and human service outcomes, creates Anti-Racism Commission, deals with sickle cell anemia, requires MCOs to cover any provider under contract for any medically necessary service regardless of inclusion on provider lists, requires DHFS to coordinate with FQHCs for care coordination services, creates committee to support billing departments in safety-net hospitals, creates Medicaid Managed Care oversight commission with DHFS and support contracts with women and minority-owned businesses, covers doula services for Medicaid, and requires DHFS to establish a Medicaid Technical Assistance Center. *Passed Senate*

[House Bill 3994](#) by Senator Julie Morrison (D) extends the vote-by-mail actions regarding curbside voting, ballot drop boxes, and mailed-in ballots without postage. *Passed Senate*

[House Bill 4945](#) by Representative Will Davis (D) repeals Blighted Areas Redevelopment Act. *Passed House*

Healthcare Pillar [Senate Bill 558](#) by Representative Camille Lilly (D) captures the Black Caucus' health care omnibus bill, adding funding for community safety-net hospitals to preserve or enhance OB-GYN services, requiring implicit bias training for providers, and adding doula services to Medicaid benefits. More controversial provisions focus on Medicaid's managed care program. Once the current contracts expire for managed care organizations in the Medicaid program, SB 558 would move all 2 million beneficiaries back to a more expensive fee-for-service benefit. *Passed House*

[Senate Bill 2481](#) by Senator Tony Munoz (D) changes tax rates on used motor vehicles and removes the cap on automobile trade-ins. *Passed Senate*

[Senate Bill 3066](#) by Representative Delia Ramirez (D) contains provisions for rental assistance programs, sealing eviction court files, and a temporary COVID stay of certain foreclosure proceedings. *Passed House*

[House Bill 3469](#) by Senator Laura Murphy (D) emergency rules for pandemics by the Secretary of State, reenacts the Restore Illinois Collaborative commission, allows for remote voting for the legislature, and allows the Illinois State Police to extend FOID expiration dates during a pandemic. *Passed Senate*

[Senate Bill 3071](#) by Representative Gregory Harris (D) makes ethics changes on statements of economic interest, appointees serving candidate political committees, fundraisers in Springfield during session, lobbying registration, and legislator code of conduct. The bill imposes a legislator revolving-door prohibition before lobbying. *No vote*

[Senate Bill 1199](#) makes tax changes and extends the South Suburban Brownfields Redevelopment Fund until 2022. This was Governor Pritzker's plan to prevent a loss of up to \$1 billion in revenue failed to pass the House. The bill would have blocked a change to the federal tax code passed by Congress as part of the coronavirus relief plan from applying to state tax bills. *Vote failed in House*

COVID-19 UPDATE & VACCINES

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) yesterday reported 5,862 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Illinois, including 97 additional deaths.

Currently, IDPH is reporting a total of 1,046,030 cases, including 17,840 deaths, in 102 counties in Illinois. The age of cases ranges from younger than one to older than 100 years. Within the past 24 hours, laboratories have reported 76,107 specimens for a total 14,339,584. As of Wednesday night, 3,642 in Illinois were reported to be in the hospital with COVID-19. Of those, 749 patients were in the ICU and 386 patients with COVID-19 were on ventilators.

The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from January 6–12, 2021 is 7.3%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from January 6–12, 2021 is 8.3%.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is now reporting coronavirus disease (COVID-19) [vaccination data on its website](#), with data to be updated daily and additional data to be provided as available. It is important to note that vaccine distribution figures are reported in real time, while vaccine administration figures are reported with as much as a 72-hour lag.

As of Wednesday night, 703,525 doses of vaccine were delivered to providers in Illinois, including Chicago. In addition, approximately 268,525 doses have been allocated to the federal government's Pharmacy Partnership Program for long-term care facilities. This brings the total Illinois doses to 972,050. IDPH is currently reporting a total of 384,658 vaccines administered, including 48,811 for long-term care facilities. The 7-day rolling average of vaccines administered daily is approximately 25,400 doses.

Illinois is still in Phase 3, Tier 3 of the **governor's reopening plan**, but Governor Pritzker may move regions showing improvement in COVID rates and hospitalizations as early as this Friday. According to the plan, the state can move to Phase 5, resuming normal operations, when a vaccine and/or widespread treatment is available for COVID. The governor has not said when he will deem the state's movement to Phase 5.

All information pertaining to the Coronavirus Response from the Governor's office and agencies can be found [here](#). DCEO regularly updates its [Frequently Asked Questions document \(available via this link\)](#).

IDVA DIRECTOR LINDA CHAPA LAVIA RESIGNS

Gov. Pritzker announced Monday that Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Linda Chapa LaVia is stepping down. Major General Peter Nezamis, Assistant Adjutant General – Air, IL National Guard will serve as interim director. A permanent director for the department will be named following a nationwide search.

THIRD PARTY AUDITOR AT EXELON

The Illinois EPA hired Synapse Energy Economics to report on the **financial condition of Exelon's nuclear plants** for a third-party report due April 1. The consultant will audit the company's plants to assess costs and revenues projected over the next five years to analyze Exelon's claim that it cannot keep the nuclear stations open with state support. Exelon's nuclear plants are responsible for over half the electricity generated in Illinois and are valuable for their carbon-free emissions.

IBHE ANNOUNCED STRATEGIC PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Illinois Board of Higher Education has announced members of the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, aimed at developing strategies for achieving the Board's vision of an equitable, accessible, and innovative higher education system in Illinois. Chicago State University President Zaldwaynaka Scott will chair the committee, with Chancellor Juan Salgado of the City Colleges of Chicago, former Illinois State Senator Pat McGuire, and Betsy Ziegler, CEO of 1871. There are 30 other members plus 7 ex-officio members. ICCTA member Martha Burns of Oakton Community College and ICCTA Executive Director Jim Reed will both serve as committee members.

Illinois Community College Trustees Association

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

February 1, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE

Bills are being filed every day now that we are underway in the new 102nd Illinois General Assembly. The introduction deadline for House bills is February 11 and February 19 for Senate bills. After these dates, we will have a pretty good idea of the universe of issues up for debate this session. ([Click here for a list of community college-related bills identified to date.](#))

Revised Session Dates

The Illinois House of Representatives will meet just one day in February. Speaker Welch cancelled previously-set session dates for Feb. 2-4, 9, 11 and 16-18 due to COVID-19 safety concerns. The House will meet in Springfield on February 10 to adopt rules to determine how business is conducted in the chamber. Part of that process will be working with the caucuses to adopt procedures to allow committees to meet virtually, allowing legislative work to continue remotely. Those rules are expected to be similar to the Senate's rules allowing remote committee hearings.

The House will reconvene in the Capitol, instead of the BOS Center, and will utilize a system of rotating members between the chamber and their offices to maintain social distancing. Going forward, there will be a balance of remote and in-person work. One change will be when committees are scheduled. In the past, committees were regularly scheduled from Tuesday afternoons through Thursday mornings. With remote committees, that schedule will be expanded to allow for meetings throughout the whole work week – primarily due to technological limitations, as only a few committees can be supported remotely at one time.

The Senate, which already has its rules in place and the ability to conduct remote committees, currently plans to meet in Springfield on February 9. Speculation continues as to whether or not the Senate will actually come to Springfield on the 9th – or in February at all.

Committee Assignments

The new Speaker has released his committee chair assignments for the House. The full membership of the committees in both the House and Senate has not yet been released.

House Committee

\$ Elementary & Sec Ed
\$ General Services
\$ Higher Education
\$ Human Services
\$ Public Safety
Adoption & Child Welfare
Agriculture & Conservation
Child Care Accessibility/Early Childhood Education**
Cities & Villages
Consumer Protection
Counties & Townships
Cybersecurity, Data Analytics & IT
Economic Opportunity & Equity

Chair

Davis
Crespo
Ford
Lilly
Mayfield
Willis
Harper
Willis
DeLuca
Carroll
Yingling
Robinson
Smith

Elem/Sec Education: Admin, Licensing, & Charters	Scherer
Elem/Sec Education: School Curriculum & Policies	Mussman
Energy & Environment Williams Ethics & Elections**	Burke
Executive	Rita
Financial Institutions	Walker
Health Care Availability & Accessibility	Greenwood
Health Care Licenses	Mah
Higher Education	Stuart
Housing**	Guzzardi
Human Services	Moeller
Immigration & Human Rights**	Gong-Gershowitz
Insurance	Jones
International Trade & Commerce**	Vacant
Judiciary - Civil	Vacant
Judiciary - Criminal	Slaughter
Labor & Commerce	Evans
Mental Health & Addiction	Conroy
Museums, Arts & Cultural Enhancement**	Lilly
Personnel & Pensions	Halpin
Police & Fire**	Hurley
Prescription Drug Affordability & Accessibility	Guzzardi
Public Utilities	Walsh
Restorative Justice	Cassidy
Revenue & Finance	Zalewski
State Government Administration	Kifowit
Tourism**	Robinson
Transportation: Regulation, Roads & Bridges	Moylan
Transportation: Vehicles & Safety	D'Amico
Veterans Affairs**	Kifowit

**Special Committee

Speaker Welch has signaled some of his legislative priorities with the creation of special committees on ethics and elections, restorative justice, and housing (which will take up issues related to the pandemic), and immigration. During the time when legislating is occurring remotely, the Speaker plans for his caucus to convene weekly on Fridays at 1 PM.

House Republican Leader Jim Durkin said he had already spoken with Speaker Welch twice in the Democrat's first 10 full days in the top leadership post — and the new Speaker expressed an interest in “meeting on a regular basis for a cup of coffee or breakfast.” Durkin is hopeful these conversations are the beginning of a more collaborative relationship (which Durkin called “refreshing”).

Durkin has also appointed members to his leadership team for the 102nd General Assembly:

- Representative Dan Brady, Deputy Minority Leader
- Representative Tom Demmer, Deputy Minority Leader
- Representative Tom Bennett, Assistant Minority Leader
- Representative Avery Bourne, Assistant Minority Leader

- Representative Tim Butler, Assistant Minority Leader
- Representative C.D. Davidsmeyer, Assistant Minority Leader
- Representative Deanne Mazzochi, Assistant Minority Leader
- Representative Ryan Spain, Assistant Minority Leader
- Representative Keith Wheeler, Assistant Minority Leader
- Representative David Welter, Republican Conference Chair
- Representative Mark Batinick, Floor Leader

The new members of the leadership team are Rep. Bennett, Rep. Mazzochi, and Rep. Welter. No longer included in leadership is Rep. Norine Hammond.

As for legislative priorities, Durkin would like to see pension reform, property tax reform, and budget reform that will base the budget off of a “revenue estimate” prepared by the bi-partisan Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability.

Legislative Vacancies

The newest departure from the state legislature is Rep. André Thapedi of Chicago, who announced his resignation on January 31 due to family health issues.

Former Senator Bill Brady’s seat has been filled for the remainder of his term by former Logan County clerk Sally Turner. Turner, who was chosen over the weekend from a field of nine applicants, is the wife of former State Rep. John Turner, who served in Springfield from 1995-2001. He was appointed to the Appellate Court in 2001, where he still serves.

Eight candidates are vying to replace former Sen. Andy Manar. They are former Decatur City Council member Shad Edwards, Macon County Assistant State’s Attorney Ruth Waller, Decatur Mayor Julie Moore Wolfe, Springfield Park Board member Lisa Badger, former Springfield City Council member Frank McNeil, current Springfield City Council member Doris Turner, Macoupin County Board member Roberta Vojas, and former state representative candidate Chase Wilhelm.

STATE BUDGET

Illinois’ loss of tax revenue because of the pandemic was much lower than experts predicted in the spring when COVID-19 first took hold, but “tremendous uncertainties” persist moving forward, according to a University of Illinois study released on January 26. Based on an analysis of state tax receipts through November 2020, the study found that people “began to adapt their behavior” to what was allowed during the pandemic and “once retail establishments and restaurants began curbside pickup services, sales started to rise.”

The pandemic’s hit to the state’s budget remains significant. The loss to the state’s general funds was \$868 million from major revenue sources. Across all state funds, the loss was \$1.44 billion. That still falls short of projections from the spring, when the UI researchers predicted revenue drops of 15% to 20% that could cost the state “billions of dollars and possibly cost tens of billions of dollars.”

Gov. JB Pritzker is due to introduce his proposal for the state’s next budget year on February 17 – likely in a virtual format since neither the House or Senate will be in session. The Pritzker administration is still looking to the federal government for help in filling the hole, a prospect that becomes a little brighter under President Joe Biden and Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress.

COVID-19 UPDATE & REGIONAL METRICS

Last Friday, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 4,156 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease in Illinois, including 71 additional deaths. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from January 22–28 is 4.3%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from January 22–28 is 5.4%.

Information pertaining to the Coronavirus Response from the Governor's office and agencies can be found [here](#).

REGIONS 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 11: Phase 4

REGIONS 8, 9, and 10: Tier 1 Mitigations

REGION 4: Tier 2 Mitigations

If all the mitigation metrics continue to improve, Region 10 (suburban Cook County) will move into Phase 4 of the Restore Illinois Plan on Tuesday, February 2.

VACCINES

The state has administered a record high number of vaccine doses for the third straight day in a row, with 58,357 doses administered in the most recent 24-hour period. A total of 1,304,475 doses of vaccine have been delivered to providers in Illinois, including Chicago. In addition, approximately 496,100 doses total have been allocated to the federal government's Pharmacy Partnership Program for long-term care facilities. This brings the total Illinois doses to 1,800,575. IDPH is currently reporting a total of 887,845 vaccines administered, including 131,401 for long-term care facilities.

White House officials pledged to increase doses to all 50 states starting this week — and to purchase 200 million additional doses of the two approved vaccines for a summer delivery. President Biden also pledged a 16% boost in dose deliveries to states. In addition, the Biden administration has committed to earlier notifications about the number of doses of the coronavirus vaccine coming to states, which should make it easier for providers to schedule shots in advance.

Illinois is also getting an additional \$43 million from the federal government to support its COVID-19 vaccination campaign. The money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency is set to come after the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced that Illinois and the city of Chicago -- which is responsible for its own pandemic response -- would get \$114.5 million to support vaccine distribution.

The news of additional doses and federal funds comes as pharmacy companies Walgreens and CVS (contracted by the federal government to provide the vaccine to long-term-care facilities), come under fire by elected officials for the slow rollout.

State Vaccination Website

Illinois health officials launched a [new website](#) Monday aimed at providing residents with up-to-date COVID-19 vaccination information, including vaccine site locations, how to make appointments, and the state's overall vaccination plan. The website, which can be found at <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/vaccine-plan-overview>, allows users to view a statewide map containing pharmacies offering vaccinations.

STATE PLANS TO LEAVE THOMPSON CENTER

The state of Illinois will pay nearly \$73.3 million to purchase the building at 555 W. Monroe St. in Chicago's West Loop neighborhood from Principal Financial Group. State officials eventually expect to move more than 1,000

employees to the 17-story, 429,316-square-foot building, previously home to regional offices of PepsiCo, from the James R. Thompson Center and leased offices in seven downtown buildings.

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS RESUME

IDPH has announced that all high school sports are now allowed to play in regions that are in Phase 4 of the State's reopening plan. Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 11 currently meet the criteria for looser restrictions. Higher-risk sports in Phase 4 are allowed to play in-conference and intra-region games. Lower-risk sports can play out-of-state tournaments and a state series.

Athletes must wear masks during the competition in sports where social distancing is not possible. There will not be unnecessary touching (like high-fives between free throws) or what is described as "'go-team' hand raises." Spectator attendance will be capped, depending on the mitigation efforts in place. IDPH guidance also asks participants and spectators not to sing, chant, or shout in their cheers. It also recommends taking athletes' temperatures before the game if practical.

HAWTHORNE OPENING ILLINOIS' FIRST OTB NON-CASINO SPORTSBOOK

Hawthorne Race Course debuted the state's first non-casino, off-track betting site with a sportsbook on January 27 when its newly remodeled Club Hawthorne opened in Crestwood with PointsBet as its operator. Hawthorne is one of two horse tracks licensed for sports betting in Illinois, along with Fairmount Park. It currently has under construction a racino that is targeted for a December opening.

CANNABIS LICENSING MOVING FORWARD

The Illinois Department of Agriculture issued the latest round of notices detailing specific problems that hopefuls for the upcoming craft cultivation, infusion, and transportation licenses can remedy in their applications. Similar notices will also be sent in the coming days to applicants who did not initially qualify for an upcoming lottery to determine the winners of the next 75 lucrative dispensary licenses.

500 ING MEMBERS ACTIVATED FOR WASHINGTON D.C.

At the request of the U.S. Department of Defense, Gov. Pritzker activated approximately 500 Illinois National Guard members in support of the continued security mission in Washington, D.C. That mission will not impact the National Guard's ability to perform vaccination distribution, with 325 Guard members already activated to carry out that mission, and hundreds more to come online in the coming weeks.

Illinois Army National Guard soldiers, along with a small contingent of Illinois Air National Guard members, are expected to remain on duty in the nation's capital until mid-March. While ING members who deployed for the Presidential Inauguration have since come home, approximately 50 members of that mission have volunteered to return for the new DC mission. The Illinois Army National Guard's Chicago-based 108th Sustainment Brigade and its subordinate battalion, the North Riverside-based 198th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, will provide the bulk of the ING force for the Washington, D.C. mission.

UNEMPLOYMENT CLAIMS REMAIN HIGH

The U.S. Department of Labor reported on January 28 that 847,000 more Americans filed new claims for state unemployment benefits last week. The federal government has now reported about 75.6 million initial jobless claims over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic — a number equivalent to roughly 47 percent of the nation's workforce. The Illinois Department of Employment Security reported 95,481 new unemployment claims were filed during the week of Jan 18 in Illinois. For comparison, during the same timeframe last year 9,762 people filed claims in Illinois.

IDES said that it has caught or stopped nearly 1 million fraud cases since March 2020. It also warns that individuals who receive 1099-G forms but did not file for Illinois unemployment benefits may be victims of fraud.

ILLINOIS CONTINUES TO LOSE POPULATION – 7 YEARS IN A ROW

Illinois has lost population for seven years running and has witnessed the second-largest population loss of all U.S. states since 2010. Illinois lost almost 2% of its residents from 2010 to 2020. In 2019, more than 308,000 Illinois residents moved to other states. The top destinations were Indiana, Florida, California, Texas, and Wisconsin. Many of those states were also top sources of residents moving to Illinois, but in smaller numbers.

The vast majority of Illinois' population loss occurred outside the Chicago area. Only nine out of 102 counties saw population growth: Champaign, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kendall, McLean, Monroe, Will, and Williamson counties. This population drop likely will lead to Illinois' loss of at least one congressional seat during the 2021-2022 reapportionment process.

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

Illinois Community College Trustees Association

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

February 8, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

CHANGES IN FEBRUARY SESSION DATES AND DEADLINES

This week, the Illinois General Assembly's spring session has been operating as it has every year – the chambers are organizing committees (see below lists) and bills are being filed, albeit slowly. So far, 706 House bills and 133 Senate bills have been filed. But session is about to enter uncharted territory – considering legislation in virtual committees.

The Senate will move online for February, conducting virtual committee meetings for the previously scheduled session days of February 9-11 and 16-18. Senate committee posting notices and hearings will be available on <https://www.ilga.gov/senate/committees/default.asp>. The Senate has also pushed back drafting and filing deadlines, postponing the drafting deadline for Senate bills from February 5 to **February 11**, and postponing the filing deadline from February 19 to **February 26**. That chamber's next scheduled session date is **March 2**.

The House will convene in person on Wednesday, **February 10**, to approve the House Rules, which we expect will enable them to convene virtual committees. To accommodate legislator requests to be included in Phase 1B of the vaccination plan, Gov. JB Pritzker will make a special location available in Springfield for legislators to receive the first dose on February 9. The introduction deadline for House bills is still **February 11**.

[Please click here for a list of community college-related bills identified to date.](#)

Gov. Pritzker will deliver his combined **State of the State and Budget Address on February 17**

LAME DUCK BILLS

The 12 House bills that passed both houses during the January 2021 **lame duck session** were sent to Gov. Pritzker this week, starting the 60-day clock the Governor has to take action on each bill. The remaining Senate bills have not yet been sent to the Governor. House bills include the controversial criminal justice reform package and the prejudgment interest bill initiated by the trial attorneys.

REDISTRICTING NEWS

Congressional, State Senate, and State House districts must be redrawn every 10 years with new census data. We learned late last week that the census data will be delayed, and the legislature will need to be creative to get maps enacted, especially since there is a constitutional deadline to make it happen by June 30.

LEGISLATIVE APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATIONS...AND AN INDICTMENT

The Senate welcomed two new members to the Democrat caucus last weekend. **Mike Simmons** has been appointed to represent the 7th District, replacing former Sen. **Heather Steans** (D-Chicago). Simmons—who is Black (half African-American, half Ethiopian) and gay—is the founder and CEO of Blue Sky Strategies, as well as deputy director of My Brother's Keeper, a national program based at the Obama Foundation that works to remove the opportunity gap for young men of color. **Doris Turner** was unanimously selected by the Democratic County Chairs of the 48th District to fill the remainder of the term of former Sen. **Andy Manar** (D-Bunker Hill). Turner is the first Black person to represent Springfield and Sangamon County in the state legislature. She has served on the Springfield City Council representing Ward 3 since 2011. Prior to that, she spent a decade serving as a Sangamon County Board member and has been the county's Democratic Party chairwoman since 2012.

State Rep. **André Thapedi** (D-Chicago) is set to resign from his seat representing the southside 32nd District in the Illinois House after 12 years. Thapedi said he wants to take an active role in searching for a replacement for his seat. Thapedi chairs the Judiciary - Civil Committee, so this will set off an internal contest to replace him. An

official date for his resignation is not yet known. He's the first member of the House to be sworn in last month to announce his resignation.

Former state Senator and former gubernatorial candidate **Sam McCann** has been indicted for spending campaign money for personal use. According to federal charges announced by the U.S. Department of Justice, McCann allegedly spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign money on personal vehicles and debts through the charges of fraud, money laundering, and tax evasion. It is also alleged that McCann purchased a recreational trailer and mobile home with campaign funds – and then used an online account to rent it to himself and funnel money into his personal account.

NEW ILGOP CHAIR CHOSEN

Members of the state GOP's Central Committee have selected **Don Tracy** of Springfield, as the next chair of the Illinois Republican Party. Tracy, a businessman and lawyer, and his 11 siblings own the family business, Dot Foods, Inc., a national redistributor of food and related products. Tracy is the first chair of the Illinois Republican Party from outside Chicago and the collar counties since 1988.

SENATE COMMITTEE CHAIR AND MINORITY SPOKESPERSON ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Minority Spokesperson</u>
Agriculture	Sen. Patrick Joyce	Sen. Darren Bailey
Appropriations	Sen. Elgie Sims Jr.	
Assignments	Sen. Kimberly A. Lightford	Sen. John Curran
Behavioral & Mental Health	Sen. Laura Fine	Sen. Terri Bryant
Commerce	Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton	Sen. Dale Fowler
Criminal Law	Sen. John Connor	Sen. Steve McClure
Education	Sen. Christopher Belt	Sen. Sue Rezin
Energy & Public Utilities	Sen. Michael E. Hastings	Sen. Sue Rezin
Environment & Conservation	Sen. Melinda Bush	Sen. Jil Tracy
Ethics	Sen. Ann Gillespie	Sen. John Curran
Executive	Sen. Cristina Castro	Sen. Jason Barickman
Executive Appointments	Sen. Laura Murphy	Sen. Jason Plummer
Financial Institutions	Sen. Laura Ellman	Sen. Jason Plummer
Health	Sen. Julie Morrison	Sen. Dave Syverson
Health Care Access & Availability	Sen. Patricia Van Pelt	Sen. Dave Syverson
Higher Education	Sen. Scott Bennett	Sen. Dale Fowler
Human Rights	Sen. Celina Villanueva	Sen. Sue Rezin
Insurance	Sen. Napoleon Harris, III	Sen. Dave Syverson
Judiciary	Sen. Rachelle Crowe	Sen. Jil Tracy
Labor	Sen. Linda Holmes	Sen. Chapin Rose
Licensed Activities	Sen. Emil Jones, III	Sen. Neil Anderson
Local Government	Sen. Steve Stadelman	Sen. Craig Wilcox
Pensions	Sen. Robert F. Martwick	Sen. Brian Stewart
Public Safety	Sen. Robert Peters	Sen. Neil Anderson
Revenue	Sen. Heather Steans	Sen. Don DeWitte
State Government	Sen. Steven M. Landek	Sen. Win Stoller
Tourism & Hospitality	Sen. Sara Feigenholtz	Sen. Sally Turner
Transportation	Sen. Ram Villivalam	Sen. Don DeWitte
Veterans Affairs	Sen. Thomas Cullerton	Sen. Craig Wilcox

HOUSE COMMITTEE CHAIR AND MINORITY SPOKESPERSON ASSIGNMENTS

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Minority Spokesperson</u>
\$ Elementary & Sec Ed	Rep. Will Davis	Rep. Tom Bennett
\$ General Services	Rep. Fred Crespo	Rep. Brad Halbrook
\$ Higher Education	Rep. LaShawn Ford	Rep. Jeff Keicher
\$ Human Services	Rep. Camille Lilly	Rep. Tom Demmer
\$ Public Safety	Rep. Rita Mayfield	Rep. Dan Swanson
Adoption & Child Welfare	Rep. Kathleen Willis	Rep. Keith Sommer
Agriculture & Conservation	Rep. Sonya Harper	Rep. Charlie Meier
Child Care Accessibility/Early Childhood**	Rep. Kathleen Willis	Rep. Joe Sosnowski
Cities & Villages	Rep. Anthony DeLuca	Rep. Andrew Chesney
Consumer Protection	Rep. Jonathan Carroll	Rep. Norine Hammond
Counties & Townships	Rep. Sam Yingling	Rep. Brad Halbrook
Cybersecurity, Data Analytics & IT	Rep. Lamont Robinson, Jr.	Rep. Keith Wheeler
Economic Opportunity & Equity	Rep. Nicholas Smith	Rep. Keith Sommer
Elem/Sec Edu: Admin, Licensing & Charters	Rep. Sue Scherer	Rep. Tom Morrison
Elem/Sec Edu: School Curriculum & Policies	Rep. Michelle Mussman	Rep. Avery Bourne
Energy & Environment	Rep. Ann Williams	Rep. David Welter
Ethics & Elections**	Rep. Kelly Burke	Rep. Ryan Spain
Executive	Rep. Robert Rita	Rep. Keith Wheeler
Financial Institutions	Rep. Mark Walker	Rep. C.D. Davidsmeyer
Health Care Availability & Accessibility	Rep. LaToya Greenwood	Rep. David Welter
Health Care Licenses	Rep. Theresa Mah	Rep. Randy Frese
Higher Education	Rep. Katie Stuart	Rep. Dan Brady
Housing**	Rep. Will Guzzardi	Rep. Deanne Mazzochi
Human Services	Rep. Anna Moeller	Rep. Norine Hammond
Immigration & Human Rights**	Rep. Jenifer Gong-Gershowitz	Rep. Jeff Keicher
Insurance	Rep. Thaddeus Jones	Rep. Dan Brady
International Trade & Commerce**	Rep. Andre Thapedi	Rep. Charlie Meier
Judiciary – Civil	Rep. Andre Thapedi	Rep. Deanne Mazzochi
Judiciary – Criminal	Rep. Justin Slaughter	Rep. Dave Severin
Labor & Commerce	Rep. Marcus Evans	Rep. Steve Reick
Mental Health & Addiction	Rep. Deb Conroy	Rep. Dave Severin
Museums, Arts & Cultural Enhancement**	Rep. Camille Lilly	Rep. Randy Frese
Personnel & Pensions	Rep. Michael Halpin	Rep. Mark Batinick
Police & Fire**	Rep. Frances Hurley	Rep. Mike Marron
Prescription Drug Affordability & Accessibility	Rep. Will Guzzardi	Rep. Tom Demmer
Public Utilities	Rep. Lawrence Walsh, Jr.	Rep. Keith Wheeler
Restorative Justice	Rep. Kelly Cassidy	Rep. Tony McCombie
Revenue & Finance	Rep. Michael Zalewski	Rep. Steve Reick
State Government Administration	Rep. Stephanie Kifowit	Rep. Joe Sosnowski
Tourism**	Rep. Lamont Robinson, Jr.	Rep. Dave Severin
Transportation: Regulation, Roads & Bridges	Rep. Martin Moylan	Rep. Mike Marron
Transportation: Vehicles & Safety	Rep. John D'Amico	Rep. Tim Butler
Veterans Affairs**	Rep. Stephanie Kifowit	Rep. Dan Swanson

**Special Committee

FEDERAL STIMULUS PACKAGE UPDATE

A group of Republican senators recently discussed its [\\$618 billion counterproposal](#) to President Joe Biden's [\\$1.9 trillion relief bill](#) with the White House. The counterproposal does not include any aid for state or local governments – a crucial element for the Illinois budget to avoid devastating cuts. Biden's plan includes **\$350 billion in direct state aid to state and city governments**, in addition to \$130 billion proposed to help reopen public schools. The aid for state and local government is one of the most debated pieces of the legislation.

Ten Republican senators are behind the proposal - precisely the number Democrats may need on their side to prevent a filibuster. Critics of the Republican proposal call it a drop in the bucket. Democrats can pass their bill with a 51-vote majority using a process called "budget reconciliation," though bipartisan support is preferred.

Congressional committees are set to start crafting legislation this week on specific components of President Biden's Covid-19 relief plan after the U.S. House and Senate each approved budget resolutions for 2021. Friday's votes in the two chambers set up a legislative course to enact Biden's stimulus without Republican votes -- a path that the president indicated he now supports, after attempts to win GOP backing for his plan failed.

COVID-19 UPDATE & REGIONAL METRICS

Last Friday, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 3,660 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease in Illinois, including 83 additional deaths. As of Friday, the total number of cases in Illinois is 1,141,219, including 19,526 deaths. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from January 29–February 4, 2021 is 3.3%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from January 29–February 4, 2021 is 4.3%.

All information pertaining to the Coronavirus Response from the Governor's office and agencies can be found [here](#).

ALL REGIONS HAVE REOPENED under [Phase 4](#) (which allows indoor dining and drinking for up to 10 people, gatherings of up to 50 people, capacities of 50% in stores and fitness centers, and puts youth sports like basketball back in business.)

Phase 4 represents the least aggressive measures until the end of the public health response. **How a region enters Phase 5:** Developments like widespread vaccination, combined with the universal protection measures required in all previous phases and tiers, ensure "health care capacity is no longer a concern, or there are no new cases over a sustained period." Phase 5 will mean the state's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is over. However, if there is another resurgence, a region **can return to Tier 1 of Phase 4** IF testing positivity rates are greater than 8% for three straight days OR there are sustained increases in testing positivity rates and hospitalizations over 7-10 days and ICU bed availability of 20% or less.

VACCINES UPDATE

COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Data: <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinedata?county=Illinois>

As of Friday, a total of 1,635,925 doses of vaccine have been delivered to providers in Illinois, including Chicago. In addition, approximately 496,100 doses have been allocated to the federal government's Pharmacy Partnership Program for long-term care facilities. This brings the total Illinois doses to 2,132,025. A total of 1,231,418 vaccines have been administered in Illinois as of Thursday last week. On Thursday, Illinois set a new one-day vaccination record with a total of 74,965 doses administered. **Nearly one in 12 Illinois residents have received one dose of the vaccine.**

To increase the limited supply of vaccine to eligible recipients, Illinois is working with Walgreens and CVS pharmacies to **temporarily redirect approximately 97,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses** that have not yet been used for the federal Pharmacy Partnership Program to providers across the state. After this transfer, approximately 110,000 doses will still remain available for the federal effort to vaccinate long-term-care residents; the federal program is administering approximately 36,000 doses per week.

President Biden's administration will begin to test a program to provide coronavirus vaccines directly to pharmacies **in Illinois** and elsewhere, as officials seek to increase the pace of U.S. inoculations. Biden's team announced last week that they will ship roughly 1 million doses per week to about 6,500 pharmacies nationwide as a trial run, beginning February 11. They also will boost shipments to states by 5 percent to 10.5 million doses per week, up from the 10 million doses announced a week earlier.

Vaccination **locations** continue to increase. On Thursday, 80 new locations were added to the list of COVID-19 vaccination locations open to the public for a current total of 390 locations. The new sites include 78 additional Walgreens locations for a total of 170 stores across the state, 15 local health department sites, 17 Kroger sites in Central and Southern Illinois, six Mariano's sites in Northern Illinois, 16 Hy-Vee locations, 92 Jewel-Osco locations, as well as five Illinois National Guard supported locations in Cook and St. Clair counties. There are now **12 State supported COVID-19 vaccination locations**.

At this time, vaccinations are by appointment only and are extremely limited due to the limited amount of vaccine. Information for locations is now listed on the coronavirus.illinois.gov website.

A new website aims to help Chicagoans find Covid-19 vaccine appointments, despite low supplies. Chicagoans can sign up on the [Zocdoc Vaccine Scheduler](#) to be notified as appointments become available. The site is free to use and has translation support in more than 100 languages. The city says several local medical systems and hospitals, such as Erie Family Health and Rush University Medical Center, are already signed up.

HIGHER EDUCATION REQUESTS VACCINE PRIORITY

Public university and community college presidents wrote to Gov. Pritzker recently, asking him to make higher education a priority for COVID-19 vaccinations. With a limited number of doses available, Gov. Pritzker explained he made the decision to place higher ed staff and students in the Phase 1C class -- or at least behind K-12 students. He followed the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to set the state vaccination priorities. The Governor also expressed confidence students will be able to attend school in the fall.

IL SPORTS BETTING REVENUE RECORD

The [Illinois Gaming Board](#) has released its full sports betting figures for the month of November, and Illinois set a new standard for the sixth month running with a traditional handle of \$449.2 million. November's handle was a 3.4 percent increase on October's amount of nearly \$434.6 million total dollars wagered at the state's eight sportsbook operators. The eightfold generated just under \$41.3 million in revenue for November as they posted a win rate of 9.1 percent on a taxable handle of just under \$453.6 million. That resulted in nearly \$6.2 million for the state's tax coffers. Cook County received \$425,355 in tax revenue on 2 percent of adjusted gross revenue for all wagers placed in the county.

IDES ANNOUNCED PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING CONTINUED ASSISTANCE ACT

The Illinois Department of Employment Security has announced progress in implementing programmatic updates and changes to several unemployment programs contained within the Continued Assistance Act, signed into law on December 27, 2020. These updates will impact the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program, the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program, PUA overpayments waivers, and the Pandemic

Emergency Unemployment Compensation program, in addition to the creation of the Mixed-Earner Unemployment Compensation program.

SKY-HIGH RECREATIONAL CANNABIS SALES

After selling \$670 million worth of recreational marijuana during the first full year of legalization, Illinois pot shops reported record sales of \$88 million in January, outpacing the \$86 million reported in December.

ILLINOIS GAMING BOARD GIVE PRELIMINARY APPROVAL FOR A ROCKFORD CASINO

Last Thursday, the Illinois Gaming Board gave unanimous preliminary approval to plans for a new casino in Rockford. In announcing his support for the \$310 million Rockford plan, Gaming Board chair Charles Schmadeke said that officials were taking a close look at the investors in the project and reserved the right to rule out anybody who could be deemed unsuitable to profit from legalized gambling in Illinois. Business owner Dan Fischer of Naperville pitched the Rockford plan to the board last week, describing himself as the effort's "managing member." In addition to Fischer, other investors in the "Hard Rock International" casino include the wife of Cheap Trick guitarist Rick Nielsen and a former mayor of Rockford. The gaming board's "preliminary suitability" vote opens the way for a temporary casino and for construction of the permanent facility in Rockford, at the site of the old Clock Tower Resort, near Interstate 90. But the Gaming Board has not yet granted the license for the casino.

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION PROPOSES CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING STANDARDS

The Illinois State Board of Education is proposing that the state implement [culturally responsive teaching and learning standards](#) for teacher preparation programs by October 2025. The new standards will train educators — regardless of their racial or economic background — to address implicit bias, systems of oppression in society, value students' lived experiences, create relationships with students' families and communities, and represent students' identities in curriculum. The new standards will be reviewed on February 16 by the bipartisan Joint Commission on Administrative Rules. At that time, Commission members will have the choice to approve, dismiss, or provide recommendations for ISBE. Republican legislators have spoken out against the proposal.

STATE REPUBLICANS INTRODUCE "VOTER EMPOWERMENT PROJECT"

Republican leaders in both chambers want Illinois voters to have more power in the legislative process. They are seeking to pass a package of resolutions to allow residents to amend the state's Constitution. In short, Republicans want to give residents more opportunities to repeal unpopular laws and remove corrupt politicians. They feel that these ideas could bring checks and balances back to state government following decades of power centralized under former House Speaker Mike Madigan.

EQUITY IN TRANSPORTATION REQUEST

Over 50 lawmakers, including new House Speaker Welch, signed on to a letter to the Illinois Department of Transportation, calling for a priority on equity in employment and bringing transportation to minority and low-income communities. According to the letter, IDOT should include community members in planning projects, hire a more diverse workforce, and deliver transportation investments to minority communities.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

February 22, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

BILLS, BILLS, AND MORE BILLS

The Illinois General Assembly did not convene last week, but a lot of legislation was filed. The House deadline for filing substantive legislation was Friday, February 19; nearly 4,000 House bills were filed. The Senate deadline is coming up on Friday, February 26. Neither chamber is scheduled to convene this week.

[House](#) and [Senate Committees](#) have not been finalized by the caucuses.

The Governor has not yet acted on any of the 19 bills passed during the January 2021 **lame duck session**.

[Please click here for a list of community college-related bills identified to date.](#)

GOVERNOR PRITZKER PROPOSES FY22 BUDGET

Last Wednesday Gov. JB Pritzker proposed a \$41.58 billion state budget in General Revenue Funds (\$95.5 billion in All Funds) for the next fiscal year. The budget relies on more than \$900 million in savings from the elimination of “corporate loopholes,” flat spending overall, increases for some programs, no income-tax increase, and a second year of skipping a recommended \$350 million boost for the school aid formula. Click here to review the [Budget in Brief](#) and the complete Fiscal Year 2022 [Budget Book](#).

Overall, the governor’s budget proposal would put higher education funding in Illinois at \$2.097 billion. Funding in this proposal would include:

- \$1.158 billion for public universities
- \$249 million for community colleges and adult education
- \$28 million in additional dollars for Monetary Award Program grants (total \$479 million)
- \$35 million (flat funding) for AIM HIGH scholarships
- \$20 million in first-year funding for College Illinois!
- \$1 million in new money for the Common Application
- \$250,000 in new money for strategic planning implementation

The Illinois Board of Higher Education also expects \$8 million for community colleges and \$12 million for IBHE from supplemental federal relief funds recently passed by Congress.

Below is a list of the \$932 million that Gov. Pritzker is laying out as part of closing “loopholes” – each of which requires legislative approval. Some of these proposals reverse agreements the Governor entered into as a result of bi-partisan budget negotiations in 2019 for the FY 2020 budget:

- Capping Net Operating Losses at \$100,000 per year (\$314 million)
- Matching Foreign-source dividends to Domestic-source dividend rates (\$107 million)
- Rolling back federal 100% accelerated depreciation (\$214 million)
- Eliminating the state biodiesel tax credit (\$107 million)
- Reinstating the corporate franchise tax, which was repealed in 2020 (\$30 million)
- Capping retail stores sales tax discount at \$1,000 per month (\$73 million)
- Reducing tax credits for private school scholarships (\$14 million)
- Eliminating an add-on deduction for construction job hires (\$16 million)
- Ending a sales tax exemption for manufacturing machinery (\$56 million)

Other key points:

- Reduce to 90% (i.e. a 10% state skim, rather than 5%) of the transfer to the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF). Between individual and corporate income tax receipts, the Governor's plan estimates this would save the state \$152 million in FY22
- The state will retain 10% of sales tax revenues that would otherwise be distributed to local transportation districts (the state has retained 5% the last few years). The Governor also recommends a \$100 million increase in the portion of state sales tax sharing covered by the Road Fund
- Transfer \$100 million from the Capital Projects Fund, \$50 million from the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Fund, and \$40 million from the School Infrastructure Fund – all to general funds
- Fully fund the 5 state retirement systems – approximately \$9.3 billion, which is about a \$742 million increase over the estimated FY21 payment
- FY22 Capital Appropriations: In FY20, the General Assembly passed and the Governor enacted the Rebuild Illinois ("RBI") package – a comprehensive capital funding plan necessary for infrastructure improvements. To date in FY21, Illinois has sold approximately \$2 billion in bonds to aid in funding RBI. Plans for an additional \$1 billion bond sale before the end of FY 21 will bring the total to \$3 billion. GOMB anticipates another \$2.5-\$3 billion in bond sales in FY22. Additionally, GOMB expects to spend \$4.3 billion in pay-go funds for FY22 and reappropriate \$45.4 billion for future projects. The FY22 recommendation includes \$4.3 billion for new capital appropriations

The Governor also used his address to call on legislators to pass ethics reform, including prohibiting legislators from leaving office to become lobbyists. He prioritizes passing an energy bill that protects the state's nuclear fleet and bolsters wind and solar industries, protects the environment, and supports jobs.

MADIGAN RESIGNS

State Rep. Michael Madigan on Thursday announced his resignation from the Illinois House after representing a southwest-side Chicago district for a half-century -- the majority of that time as the powerful House Speaker. He remains chair of the Democratic Party of Illinois and Democratic committeeman for the 13th Ward. The latter role gave Madigan the ability to handpick his successor in the 22nd House District because he controls more than 50% of the weighted vote based on the number of ballots cast for him when he sought a 26th term in November 2020. On Sunday, – 13th Ward infrastructure manager **Edward Guerra Kodatt** was selected with 63% of the weighted vote.

2022 GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Former State Senator Paul Schimpf (R) will run for Illinois governor in 2022. A former military prosecutor, he ran and lost for Attorney General in 2014. Gary Rabine, owner of a paving and roofing company, has also declared as a Republican candidate. State Senator Darren Bailey is expected to announce his candidacy soon, while central Illinois-based U.S. Reps. Rodney Davis and Darren LaHood have not ruled out possible runs.

CENSUS AND REDISTRICTING UPDATES

U.S. Census officials will not have data available until September 30. This will pose a big problem for the Illinois General Assembly, which must approve a legislative district map based on those numbers by July 1. Officially, the map for congressional districts must be filed by October 5, but candidates for the 2022 election will have a very quick turnaround in deciding to run with a December petition-filing deadline. One option is to use preliminary data to draw the maps, assuming that they will face enough legal challenges in the court system to extend the process through September when the actual data is available.

PRESIDENT BIDEN'S AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN

The U.S. House Oversight Committee has approved President Biden's \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package, with \$350 billion allocated to state and local governments. It is anticipated that the House will pass the bill as early as this week. The Senate will consider the bill soon, with allocations to local governments within 60 days of the bill signed into law.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Last Friday, the Illinois Department of Public Health reported 2,219 new confirmed and probable cases of coronavirus disease in Illinois, including 63 additional deaths. The preliminary seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test from February 12–18 is 2.8%. The preliminary seven-day statewide test positivity from February 12–18 is 3.3%.

Illinois cases continue to drop as new COVID-19 cases mirror the number of cases being reported in late September, but the state also passed the grim milestone of 20,000 total deaths statewide. Illinois surpassed 10,000 total deaths on Nov. 5 – it took more than nine months from the beginning of the pandemic in Illinois to reach 10,000 deaths, but it only took a little over three months for the death toll to double.

All information pertaining to the Coronavirus Response from the Governor's office and agencies can be found [here](#).

Chicago and Cook County health officials on Tuesday eased some indoor dining restrictions by increasing capacity limits for restaurants, bars, and event spaces to 40 percent or 50 people, whichever is less.

VACCINES

COVID-19 Vaccine Administration Data: <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinedata?county=Illinois>

A total of 2,186,775 vaccine doses have been delivered to providers in Illinois, including Chicago. In addition, approximately 445,200 doses total have been allocated to the federal government's Pharmacy Partnership Program for long-term care facilities. This brings the total Illinois doses to 2,631,975. A total of 2,060,706 vaccines have been administered in Illinois as of midnight Friday, including 271,142 for long-term care facilities. The 7-day rolling average of vaccines administered daily is 59,460 doses. Thursday last week, 83,673 doses were administered, marking the highest single day number of vaccines administered in Illinois.

There are now three additional state-supported mass vaccination sites in southern and central Illinois. Two vaccination sites will operate in Carbondale, and one site will provide vaccines in Springfield. There are now more than 850 vaccination locations in Illinois open to the public. While the state is working to increase the number of vaccines administered daily, it is limited by the amount of vaccine available and allocated by the federal government. Information for locations is listed on the coronavirus.illinois.gov website.

Due to the recent adverse weather across the United States, the federal government's delivery of COVID-19 vaccines will be delayed. To help offset these delays, the State of Illinois proactively ordered vaccine to be delivered to its Strategic National Stockpile Receipt, Store, and Stage site in anticipation of adverse weather. Illinois has been distributing that vaccine to many providers around the state, as weather permits, to continue to support vaccination operations.

JCAR APPROVES NEW TEACHER EDUCATION RULES

The Joint Committee on Administrative Rules has approved controversial new regulations proposed by the Illinois State Board of Education. Democrats all supported the new teaching standards in college teacher

education preparation programs, meant to train new teachers in being more accommodating to diverse students. Republicans felt the new standards went too far in pushing a particular political ideology.

NEW DCEO DIRECTOR

Gov. Pritzker has named **Sylvia Garcia** as director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, following Erin Guthrie's resignation to join Dell Technologies. Garcia previously served as COO of the Chicago Transit Authority and principal consultant at WSP USA.

RENEWABLE NATURAL GAS FACILITY

Will County has approved construction of a \$45 million renewable natural gas plant at its Prairie View landfill. The new facility will inject biogas into the RNG pipeline grid for use as a transportation fuel. The county will also sell renewable compressed natural gas, which can replace diesel fuel in vehicles. In 2010, the county began an agreement with Waste Management to convert a portion of the methane gas created from decomposition in the landfill to power a 4.8 MW gas-to-electricity plant. The electricity is then sold on the local market to residents and businesses. The new agreement will allow for the sale of all the methane gas. After an initial investment of an estimated \$45 million to build the RNG plant and pipeline, the county could receive \$12-20 million annually, based on market prices, in non-taxpayer revenue for more than 25 years.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

March 1, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

The Illinois General Assembly did not convene last week, but much more legislation was filed. Virtual committee hearings have been posted for both chambers, beginning Monday, March 1. Neither chamber is scheduled to convene this week, but there is talk of legislators returning to Springfield on Tuesday, March 9. Lobbyists and the general public would not be allowed in the State Capitol.

The House deadline for filing substantive legislation was Friday, February 19. A total of 4,002 House bills have been filed. In the Senate, a total of 2,780 bills were filed before the Friday, February 26 deadline.

As Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch indicated in his first speech, House Rules require all House bills to be assigned to committee; the chairs will then have the authority to decide whether bills will be called for a vote in the committee. That said, House committees will be very full this week with assigned bills and committee hearings. [House](#) and [Senate](#) Committee hearing dates can be found [here](#).

*****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.***

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM SIGNED INTO LAW

On Monday, Gov. JB Pritzker signed [House Bill 3653](#), the criminal justice reform package. Backed by the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, this newly enacted law will end the use of cash bail for non-violent offenses in the state by 2023, create a statewide certification system for law enforcement officers, require all law enforcement officers to wear body cameras by 2025, and expand use-of-force guidelines and training for law enforcement. Other provisions aim to provide more transparency and accountability in policing, including enhancing protections for whistleblowers and banning the use of chokeholds by law enforcement. Illinois becomes the first state to eliminate cash bail. Opponents of HB 3653 included multiple states’ attorneys and law enforcement organizations, who said that the reform package makes communities less safe and places unfunded mandates on local law enforcement agencies and courts. Police leaders have also said the new law may create challenges in officer recruitment and retention.

COVID-19 WORKERS COMP EXTENSION SIGNED INTO LAW

On Friday, Gov. Pritzker signed [HB 4276](#) into law, effective immediately. The legislation extends worker compensation benefits until June 30, 2021, for first responders and frontline essential workers who were exposed to and contracted COVID-19 through their job.

MADIGAN SUCCESSOR APPOINTED – THEN RESIGNED – THEN GUERRERO-CUELLAR APPOINTED

The 22nd House District seat held by Michael Madigan for 50 years was occupied by Edward Guerra Kodatt, a 26-year-old aide within Madigan’s 13th ward – for three days. Initially, 11 applicants applied to replace the longtime House Speaker. As precinct committeeperson, Madigan held 56 percent of the weighted vote for the appointment and was able to select his replacement. Kodatt then resigned at Madigan’s urging, after Madigan learned of “alleged questionable conduct by Mr. Kodatt.” The House clerk received Kodatt’s resignation Wednesday morning, February 24. On Thursday, Madigan selected community activist Angelica Guerrero-Cuellar, the candidate who received the second most votes in the original vote and the choice of Ald. Silvana Tabares.

MADIGAN RESIGNS AS CHAIR OF DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF ILLINOIS

After appointing the successor to his House seat, Madigan announced he is stepping down as chair of the Democratic Party of Illinois – a move he said he was not ready to make just last week. U.S. Rep. Robin Kelly (D-Matteson) and Chicago Ald. Michelle Harris are vying for the role. In an interview, Madigan said he will remain active in Democratic politics — though he will not be involved in the redistricting process. And asked whether he stayed in office too long, the former House speaker said, “I don’t think so. Others may disagree.”

BRING BACK THE GRADUATED INCOME TAX PLAN?

Speaker Welch suggested Wednesday that he still supports changing the state income tax structure from a flat-tax rate to a graduated structure. He explained that he would like to see it go before voters again -- but with pension obligations attached to it. “Tell the voters exactly how you’re going to spend this new money, and they may trust us more,” Welch said, adding that it is a tactic that has worked in other states.

BAILEY ANNOUNCED CAMPAIGN FOR GOVERNOR

State Sen. Darren Bailey (R-Xenia) kicked off his long-anticipated campaign for Governor last Monday. Bailey has been a loud critic of Gov. Pritzker and has led the conservative movement against the Governor’s executive orders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

MCCANN PLEADS NOT GUILTY

Former state senator and gubernatorial candidate Sam McCann has pled not guilty in his campaign-fund fraud case. McCann was indicted by a federal grand jury on February 3. He is accused of engaging in an elaborate scheme to illegally use campaign funds for expenses that include automobile and mortgage payments.

2021 KEY SESSION DATES:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| • March 26 | Deadline for substantive bills out of committee |
| • March 29 - April 9 | Spring break |
| • April 6 | Consolidated election (including community college trustee seats) |
| • 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 |

COVID-19 & VACCINE UPDATE

COVID cases and deaths continue to drop, as the statewide seven-day positivity rate decreases to 2.7 percent. The Illinois Department of Public Health is reporting a total of 1,183,667 cases, including 20,460 deaths as of Friday. All information pertaining to the state of Illinois’ Coronavirus Response can be found [here](#). COVID-19 vaccination data can be found [here](#).

As of Thursday, Illinois expanded Phase 1B eligibility to include individuals with underlying conditions, including those 16 and older. Residents will not be required to provide proof of an underlying condition.

Additional state-supported mass vaccination sites in Rockford and Collinsville launched last week, and a site at the United Center arena will be available on March 10. Downstate sites will ramp up to provide up to 1,350 doses per day at full capacity, and the United Center could provide as many as 6,000 vaccine doses per day. These sites build upon the mass vaccination infrastructure across the state, with 14 state-supported sites now operating in Illinois. There are now more than 850 vaccination locations in Illinois open to the public. While the state is working to increase the number of vaccines administered daily, it is limited by the amount of vaccine available and allocated by the federal government. Location information is listed on the coronavirus.illinois.gov website.

As of Monday, Illinois ranked 22nd among the 50 U.S. states for per capita vaccine distribution, with 16.1 percent of the state's population having received at least one dose (according to [data from The New York Times](#)). The state had previously ranked as low as 47th nationally in late January, according to that database. Roughly 6.7 percent of the population has received two doses.

Additionally, a newly approved single-dose vaccine from Johnson & Johnson will make millions more doses available to states in the coming weeks – possibly even a 20 percent increase in Illinois' supply. Illinois expects to begin administering an average of **100,000 doses per day by mid-March**, Gov. Pritzker said after touring a vaccination site in West Peoria on Wednesday.

Chicago has eased travel limits as the statewide infections and hospitalizations fall to July-level numbers. The city will no longer apply travel restrictions to individuals who have been fully vaccinated against the virus.

LEGISLATIVE PANEL FOCUSES ON HEALTHCARE ISSUES

Key lawmakers participated in a panel led by Healthnews Illinois this week. House Majority Leader Greg Harris (D) shared that he wants the General Assembly's Medicaid Working Group to focus on behavioral health access and prior authorization to ensure insurance companies are "not abusing" the practice. He also mentioned his PBM reform bill ([House Bill 3630](#)) and said that he wants to address the needs of patients with post-acute COVID-19 syndrome. Deputy Republican Leader Tom Demmer (R) warned that carving services from the state's managed care program for Medicaid could cause insurance plans to leave the program. Rep. Demmer is focusing on telehealth, allowing it to be a permanent part of healthcare delivery. Senate Majority Caucus Chair Mattie Hunter (D) continues to work on the Black Caucus' healthcare bill, which did not pass the General Assembly in January due to timing.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR TELEHEALTH SERVICES

Several bills introduced this year would require insurance plans to cover telehealth services while reimbursing providers at the same rates as in-person visits. [House Bill 3498](#) is backed by the Coalition to Protect Telehealth, largely supported by the Illinois Hospitals and Healthcare Association. The current executive order, in place due to COVID-19, directs all commercial health insurers to cover telehealth services and reimburse providers at in-person visit rates, also prohibiting any cost-sharing for in-network providers unless a deductible has not been met for high-deductible plans. Gov. Pritzker continues to extend the executive order in place since last March.

ISBE SEEKS WAIVER FOR STANDARDIZED TESTS

For the second year in a row, the Illinois State Board of Education is seeking a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education for standardized tests normally given during schools' spring semester. State Superintendent Carmen Ayala has noted that more than a million Illinois students are still receiving their education completely through remote learning. If the Education Department agrees, tests like the SAT and certain graduation requirements — like high school civics — would be waived for the Class of 2021. More than 600 district superintendents across the state also signed onto the waiver application.

PRITZKER CALLS ON LOW-INTEREST LOAN PROGRAM FOR SMALL MUNICIPALITIES HIT WITH HIGH GAS PRICES

In response to recent extreme weather conditions, Gov. Pritzker has asked the Illinois Finance Authority to develop a \$15 million low-interest loan program to help small municipalities that have been financially impacted by record high natural gas prices. On average, natural gas in the winter costs the impacted municipal utilities around \$2-\$3 per dekatherm. Municipal utilities drawing from the Panhandle Pipeline paid \$225 per dekatherm from February 13 through February 16. These bills are required to be paid within the next few weeks, and small municipalities could be financially crippled without any assistance.

EXPANDED CAREER TRAINING FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

Gov. Pritzker has announced new investments to the Youth Career Pathways program that will expand training for Illinois youth who face barriers to education, training, and employment. Through a Notice of Funding Opportunity released by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois will expand access to training and support services for youth ages 16-24 and who are most at-risk for falling behind on career preparation. The NOFO is seeking proposals from school districts, community colleges, community-based organizations and other partners equipped to provide workforce development training that will help vulnerable youth gain access to skills training and work-based learning that will prepare them for job entry. Applications for the NOFO are due on April 1. To apply for the NOFO, please visit [DCEO's website](#).

2020 HEMP HARVEST NUMBERS DROP

The Illinois Department of Agriculture has released final harvest numbers from the 2020 hemp growing season. IDOA issued 802 Hemp Growers licenses for the 2020 season. Hemp farmers reported 2,734 acres planted, resulting in 2,392 acres harvested. The 2020 numbers are down from 2019 -- just over 2,800 acres for total harvested crop. "The hemp industry, just like many others was hit by the pandemic," said IDOA Division of Cannabis Manager David Lakeman.

ILLINOIS BEP PROGRAM ANNOUNCES DISPARITY STUDY

The Illinois Department of Central Management Services' Business Enterprise Program has announced a new disparity study that will examine the availability and utilization of businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and people living with disabilities on state contracts. This study is one of the latest efforts by the state to promote the economic inclusion of historically disadvantaged businesses in accordance with state law ([30 ILCS 575/4\(d\)](#)).

State and local governments must provide a factual basis that a disparity exists in accessing contracting opportunities as a precondition to establishing affirmative action programs. The study will provide quantitative and qualitative evidence to determine the availability of ready, willing, able and qualified firms for participation in state contracts; determine if a disparity exists; and if so, determine why the disparity exists and what solutions or remedies could be implemented.

EXELON TO BREAK UP

Energy provider Exelon announced it will split into two publicly traded companies, separating its regulated utilities business (including ComEd) from its power generation unit (including the nation's largest fleet of carbon-free nuclear power plants) in the biggest breakup of a local company in nearly a decade. According to Exelon, the separation gives each company the financial and strategic independence to focus on specific customer needs while executing core business strategies. The company added that it will "retire" uneconomic assets that negatively affect its ability to provide a reliable source of clean power, meaning that Illinois nuclear power plants could still be closed as planned. The split must be approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and New York's utility regulators.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

March 8, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

For the first time in Illinois General Assembly history, legislation passed out of committee hearings in a virtual setting last week. Approximately 40 committees were scheduled, but several were cancelled, and many merely conducted introductions and some housekeeping business. No gigantic issues have been considered yet. The House of Representatives will continue with virtual committees next week, but the Senate plans to convene in person at the State Capitol from Tuesday through Thursday. Lobbyists will not be allowed in the building to interact with legislators. All bills have now been filed – nearly 7,000 in all – but any bill can be amended with new language at any time.

*****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.***

CAMPAIGN UPDATES

U.S. Rep. **Robin Kelly** (D) replaces Michael Madigan as chair of the Democratic Party of Illinois.

State Sen. **Michael Hastings** (D) of Tinley Park has announced that he will run for Secretary of State in 2022. Hastings has served in the Senate for nine years. He faces a growing field of candidates: Chicago Ald. **Pat Dowell**, former state Treasurer (and Illinois Community College Board chair) **Alexi Giannoulis**, and Chicago City Clerk **Anna Valencia** are all trying to line up support for the contest.

2021 KEY SESSION DATES

- March 26 Deadline for substantive bills out of committee
- March 29 - April 9 Spring break
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- 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

COVID-19 UPDATE

COVID cases and deaths continue to drop, lowering the statewide seven-day positivity rate to **2.2 percent**. The Illinois Department of Public Health reports a total of 1,194,702 Illinois cases, including 20,700 deaths, as of Friday. All information pertaining to the state of Illinois' coronavirus response efforts can be found [here](#).

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued emergency use authorization to the University of Illinois System for covidSHIELD, its **saliva-based COVID-19 test**, which was used on U of I campuses for widespread testing with rapid results. The federal authorization will allow the program to easily expand testing for schools, businesses, and community partners. A total of \$20 million in federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act funding will provide a million tests across the state's 12 public universities and 48 community colleges, under an agreement between IDPH and the U of I system.

COVID VACCINE UPDATE

A total 3,780,305 doses of vaccine have been delivered to providers in Illinois, including Chicago. In addition, approximately 443,700 doses have been allocated to the federal government's Pharmacy Partnership Program for long-term care facilities. This brings the **total Illinois doses to 4,224,005**. A total of 3,125,425 vaccines have been administered in Illinois as of midnight Thursday, including 336,911 for long-term care facilities. The seven-day rolling average of vaccines administered daily is 83,115 doses. County COVID-19 vaccine administration data is available at <https://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/vaccinedata?county=Illinois>.

Illinois expects to receive its **first shipment of Johnson & Johnson vaccines** totaling over 83,000 this week. Most of those doses will be distributed to mass vaccination sites throughout the state.

IDPH is encouraging vaccine recipients to utilize the [V-Safe after Vaccination Health Checker](#), which sends a text reminder for the second shot and allows patients to communicate with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about side-effects.

Gov. JB Pritzker has launched a **new public awareness campaign** directed to residents in the hardest-hit communities who are reluctant to receive the vaccine. The \$10 million campaign will reach Illinoisans statewide in both English and Spanish through a variety of media channels, including cable, broadcast and connected TV; streaming audio and radio; billboards and bus shelters; digital display and video; print and social media. Like other coronavirus-related expenses, costs are reimbursable by the federal government.

As of 3 p.m. Thursday, more than 27,800 seniors had signed up for vaccination appointments at the **United Center** in Chicago. Seniors continued to have "exclusive access" to the appointments through Sunday and doses will be administered at the site starting Tuesday.

The state of Illinois is partnering with **five local federally-qualified health centers** and **four safety-net hospitals** to administer COVID vaccines. Additional critical-access hospitals will be added in coming weeks. Two additional state-supported mass vaccination sites in **Des Plaines and Quincy** were launched last week. Information for locations is listed on the coronavirus.illinois.gov website.

ILLINOIS PENSION DEBT EXCEEDS \$300 BILLION

A new report by the credit rating agency Moody's says that Illinois will set a new record this year when it reports a total **net pension liability of more than \$300 billion** -- the highest of any state in the nation. As of June 30, the total unfunded liabilities of the state's five pension systems stood at \$317 billion, a 19 percent increase from the prior year. That was largely due to historically low interest rates, which have depressed pension fund earnings throughout the country. With the state's gross domestic product estimated to have fallen 2.5 percent in calendar year 2020, that pension liability amounts to roughly 37 percent of the state's total economic output, up from a range of 28-32 percent over the previous four years. When combined with other long-term liabilities (including retiree health care and bonded indebtedness), Moody's estimates that the state's total liability ratio will amount to **48 percent of GDP** for the fiscal year 2021 reporting cycle.

CANNABIS SALES HIT A NEW HIGH

In February, average daily sales of recreational marijuana hit a new high of roughly \$2.88 million, up from \$2.86 million a month earlier, according to the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. All told, dispensaries sold more than \$80 million in recreational pot products last month. That marked a drop from the record \$88 million in sales recorded in January, when there were three more days of sales. In the first full year of legalization, **recreational pot sales reached nearly \$670 million**. Based on this year's first two months, total

sales in 2021 are on pace to eclipse **\$1 billion**. The sales figures are reported separately from medical marijuana tallies, which are reported later in the month.

STANDARDIZED TESTING OF STUDENTS

Illinois and other states across the country recently called on the federal government to waive requirements for federally mandated standardized testing this year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But [in a letter](#) published late last month, the U.S. Department of Education wrote that schools must administer the exams, although they will not be held accountable for the results.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

March 15, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

SPRING SESSION UPDATE

The Illinois House of Representatives continued to conduct committee work virtually last week, while the Senate returned to Springfield for session, with some members choosing to participate remotely. As far as the public is concerned, **all committee and floor action is virtual**. The Senate has had a much lighter committee schedule than the House, convening primarily on Tuesday and Wednesday for a majority of their committees. Committee chairs created numerous subcommittees in both chambers and shifted legislation from the full committees to subcommittees. Once a bill is assigned a subcommittee, it must first advance through both the subcommittee and full committee before it can be considered on the floor.

*****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.***

It is important to note the [new House rules](#) adopted for the 102nd General Assembly not only allowed for virtual committee hearings, but also made the notable change of requiring all legislation filed in odd-numbered years (such as 2021) to be discharged from the House Rules Committee to a standing committee prior to the committee deadline. This requirement will lead to **long bill lists for each committee** and also result in more and more bills being sent to subcommittees.

Members and media personnel are utilizing the **University of Illinois saliva test** for rapid testing throughout the week. The Senate will continue convening in-person and can allow lobbyists, but they also will be required to take the saliva test.

Speaker Welch is calling the **House back to Springfield on Thursday, March 18** to work on at least two bills that need floor action (virtual committees will continue throughout the rest of the week). [House Bill 1871](#) calls for allocating federal funds from the Help America Vote Act to be used for establishing **ballot drop boxes** around the state. [HB 158](#) addresses **disparities in medical care** and other services in Black communities; it is the last of the four pillars of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus agenda. Gov. JB Pritzker is still hoping for a bill to **decouple** the state income tax revenues from a federal pandemic tax relief provision. Representatives will likely not meet in person again until after the spring break in mid-April.

On March 8, Gov. Pritzker signed the [Education "pillar"](#) of the Black Caucus agenda passed during the January 2021 lame-duck session. The new law is effective immediately.

Governor Pritzker also signed into law an equity-driven **healthcare and hospital transformation plan**. With support from federal matching funds, Illinois will invest \$150 million into collaboratives that fill healthcare gaps and focus on underlying health conditions in areas high on the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's social vulnerability index scale, communities that have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and areas served by critical access and safety net hospitals, including rural parts of Illinois.

STATE BUDGET

President Biden on Thursday signed the **\$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act**. Illinois stands to receive billions in investments to boost COVID-19 vaccination efforts, support for working families, transportation systems,

schools, small businesses, etc. The stimulus money will not be available for paying off pension debt – it will be earmarked for specific use. There will likely be an effort to pay off borrowing debt that the state incurred during the pandemic and to reduce some of Illinois' bill backlog that has grown with 12 percent interest payments. The state could also pay off Medicaid bills, which would bring more federal dollars to the state:

- \$7.5 billion for state funding, \$1.8 billion for Chicago, and \$4.2 billion for other municipalities
- \$275 million in vaccine distribution money
- \$1.5 billion in testing and public health money for Illinois' health departments
- More than \$100 million for mental health and substance abuse treatment efforts
- \$5 billion for Illinois K-12 schools
- Lowering health premiums on the Affordable Care Act exchange for the average Illinois couple by \$1,300 by boosting subsidies

The Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability reported last week that the state's **budget outlook continues to improve**. Gross sales tax receipts are up this fiscal year by 2.4 percent. The withholding tax on unemployment benefits has increased those receipts by 3.5 percent. COGFA adjusted its sales tax projections upward by \$706 million, and personal income tax receipts were adjusted upward by \$1.17 billion from its original projection (and up \$1 billion from its November projection).

COGFA also adjusted its Fiscal Year 2022 outlook. The estimates for both fiscal years track with new estimates by the Governor's Office of Management and Budget, with the difference closed by the Governor's plan to close what he calls corporate tax loopholes (\$932 million) and the redirecting of revenue from other funds (\$565 million), both of which require legislative approval. The full report is [here](#).

2021 KEY SESSION DATES

- | | |
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| • May 31 | Adjournment |

ILLINOIS CREDIT RATING RAISED

S&P Global Ratings revised the state's credit outlook from negative to stable. It even hinted at a possible upgrade if the state takes prudent fiscal steps. Illinois is a tiny notch away from junk bond status. The rating agency noted Illinois' credit strengths, including a stronger-than-expected revenue performance and budget cuts by the Pritzker administration. Also leading to the improved credit outlook was the non-reliance on additional federal stimulus payments in the proposed budget.

LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

The **House Redistricting Committee** has scheduled 23 public hearings statewide in April, seeking input from Illinois residents about redistricting even though census data from the federal government will be months behind schedule. State lawmakers are required to complete the remap by June 30 or a bipartisan committee will take over the work, something Democrats will try to avoid. **Looming over all discussions** is whether the 2022 primary will be delayed. A late map would make it difficult to meet deadlines for gathering signatures for candidate nominating petitions.

COVID-19 UPDATE

COVID-19 numbers have remained stable over the past week and continue to be some of the lowest reported since the beginning of the pandemic one year ago. **The state's 7-day statewide positivity rate is 2.2 percent.** In one full year since the state effectively shut down, 1.2 million Illinoisans have tested positive, and 20,901 Illinoisans have died.

Restrictions were eased this week for attendance at Chicago's baseball games and for some outdoor athletic venues for Illinois schools and other recreational sports venues. Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot announced that both the Chicago Cubs and the Chicago White Sox could open their stadiums to fans at 20 percent capacity with mask-wearing and social distancing. Illinois schools and other recreational sports venues located in regions in Phase 4 can increase spectators from 50 persons to 20 percent of the outdoor venue capacity. The new guidance applies to all youth and adult recreational sports, school-based sports (high school and elementary school), travel clubs, private leagues and clubs, recreational leagues and centers, and park district sports programs. This guidance does not pertain to professional sports leagues or college division level sports. The new guidance is [here](#).

Looking at federal **estimates of excess deaths** — how many more people died than is usually expected — Illinois ranked among the 10 worst states (including the District of Columbia) for the 10-month period from March through December. In Illinois, nearly 111,000 people died from March 1 through Jan. 2, as tallied on a weekly basis by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That is **27 percent higher than the average** for 2015 through 2019, which was about 87,000 deaths for the same 44-week period.

All information pertaining to the Coronavirus Response from the Governor's office and agencies can be found [here](#).

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE

Approximately **54 percent of those 65 years and older** are now vaccinated against COVID-19 in Illinois. Gov. Pritzker applauded President Joe Biden's order last Thursday that states make the vaccines **available to all American adults by May 1** and that all Americans 18 and older get vaccinated by the Fourth of July.

Approximately **5 million doses** have been delivered to providers in Illinois. A total of 3,680,703 vaccines have been administered in Illinois, including 353,125 for long-term care facilities. Illinois' 7-day vaccine administration average is 98,166 doses per day.

More than 80 days after the first shots of the coronavirus vaccine were administered in Illinois, more than 1 million people in Illinois have been fully vaccinated.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued updated [guidance](#) for individuals who have been fully vaccinated. Individuals who are vaccinated should continue to wear masks when they are in public, avoid crowds, and take other precautions when gathering with unvaccinated people who are at high risk of serious illness from COVID-19. Individuals are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after they have gotten the second shot of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or two weeks after receiving the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

Guidance on who can register for the **United Center mass vaccination site** was changed to focus on Chicagoans after the majority of early appointments were made by those who live outside the city. Sixty percent of the United Center appointments are reserved for Chicago residents, 30 percent for residents of suburban Cook, and 10 percent for Illinoisans who live elsewhere.

Nine critical access hospitals were selected as part of the federal **Safety Net Direct Vaccine Allocation Pilot program**. This is the next phase of the federal vaccine pilot program announced on March 3, in which five federally qualified health centers and four safety net hospitals started receiving vaccine doses directly from the federal government. This next phase specifically targets rural communities, providing hundreds of doses to each site per week. Information for locations is listed on the coronavirus.illinois.gov website.

SPORTS WAGERING

Just in time for March Madness, another online sportsbook is launching in Illinois. Barstool is bringing its iOS and Android sports betting app to the state starting March 11. Sports betting has exploded in popularity in Illinois. In January alone, Illinois gamblers wagered \$580 million on sports. Since sports wagering began on March 9, 2020, Illinois has seen more than \$2 billion in total sports bets. This year, the state is expected to bring in more than \$6 billion in total sports wagers. ***Illinois law prohibits wagering on any Illinois collegiate team.***

LAWMAKERS REVISIT DATA COLLECTION PRIVACY LAWS

State lawmakers are considering changes to an internet privacy law that recently led to a **\$650 million settlement** between Facebook and more than 1 million of the website's users in Illinois. A House judiciary committee has advanced [HB 559](#), a measure that would revisit the Biometric Information Privacy Act of 2008, to include provisions that sponsors say will protect small businesses but detractors say will render the privacy law obsolete.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

March 22, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

SPRING SESSION UPDATE

It was a very busy five days in Springfield last week. The Senate convened in-person on Tuesday and Wednesday, and the House held a one-day marathon session on Thursday. The House passed bills to establish **permanent vote-by-mail expansions and curbside voting** statewide ([House Bill 1871](#)) and the Black Caucus' **healthcare reform bill** ([HB 158](#)).

HB 158 would implement several policy shifts aimed at addressing medical disparities. Cost estimates for the bill range from \$5 billion to \$12 billion to fully implement. The bill includes a moratorium on hospital closures until Dec. 31, 2023. Multiple Black legislators have recently advocated for measures that would prevent the closure of Mercy Hospital in Chicago, which has entered bankruptcy but serves many in poverty in the city's south side. A Medicaid Technical Assistance Center would work with community-based providers with addressing social determinants of health for behavioral health issues. The bill also creates an anti-racism commission that will create policy recommendations related to racial equity, requires implicit bias training for medical professionals, and allows Medicaid reimbursement for doulas working with pregnant and post-partum women. Republicans opposed the bill, raising questions over the costs of its provisions. It ultimately passed 72 to 41.

[Senate Bill 72](#) (Hoffman-D) also passed the House as an alternative to a lame-duck session bill that imposes a 9% **prejudgment interest** on injury awards beginning from notice of injury. SB 72 imposes prejudgment interest at a rate of 6% when the case is filed, with a maximum of five years, and the interest does not apply to punitive damages, sanctions, statutory attorney's fees or costs.

These measures now head to the Senate, where they are expected to pass. Not considered was a bill to "decouple" from federal tax law changes.

[House Bill 804](#) (the Clean Energy Jobs Act) passed from the House Energy & Environment Committee and is now on House Second Reading. The bill aims at committing Illinois to 100% renewable energy by 2050, focusing on carbon reduction and job creation. It ends "capacity payments" and automatic rate increases by requiring performance-based rate setting. The bill also removes Illinois from the multi-state capacity auction.

Both chambers continued holding **virtual committee hearings** last week and will do so again this week. All bills are due to be reported from a standing committee on March 26, but the Senate is extending the deadline to April 16. The House might do the same. The House is not expected to return to Springfield until after spring break in mid-April.

*****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.***

STATE BUDGET

Legislators are calling for their input to be considered when determining how the state will spend the \$7.5 billion in federal dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Gov. JB Pritzker has said the funds will be used to pay down debt incurred during the pandemic, including money borrowed from the federal government's municipal liquidity facility program. The state's unpaid bill backlog is still \$9.5 billion.

State Comptroller Susana Mendoza has warned that “this is not Christmas,” and that legislators should not make new plans on how to spend the federal money since it is “essentially spoken for” to put towards paying back borrowed funds. The State will not receive the \$7.5 billion at one time.

2021 KEY SESSION DATES

- March 26 Deadline for substantive bills out of committee (House)
- 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

THAPEDI RESIGNS

State Representative **Andre Thapedi** resigned from the 32nd House District. Democrat party leaders will appoint his replacement.

TAX FILING DEADLINES EXTENDED

The Internal Revenue Service and the state of Illinois are **delaying tax filings until May 17**. The newly announced Illinois filing extension, however, does not apply to estimated tax payments that are due on April 15.

REIMAGINE ILLINOIS

House Republicans announced their legislative priorities in their [Reimagine Illinois](#) platform, which outlines four “common sense” areas: ethics reform, fiscally responsible leadership, growing jobs, and ensuring public safety. Republicans are pushing for pension reform to address the state’s structural deficit.

COVID-19 & VACCINE UPDATE

COVID-19 numbers have remained relatively steady over the past week but have risen a little bit. **The 7-day statewide positivity rate is 2.5%**. All information pertaining to the Coronavirus Response from the Governor’s office and agencies can be found [here](#).

The state is averaging over **100,000 vaccines daily**. Gov. Pritzker is sending National Guard members to rural communities to deliver 1,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine daily. He also announced vaccine eligibility to all Illinois residents 16 and older will be available **beginning April 12**. Vaccine eligibility was expanded to several additional groups of essential workers (including **higher education staff**) ahead of the April 12 date:

- March 22, 2021 Higher education staff, government workers, and media
- March 29, 2021 Restaurant staff, construction trade workers, and religious leaders
- April 12, 2021 Any resident age 16 and up

Once 70% of the 65+ population has received a first vaccine dose (now at 58%), the state will move to a “**bridge phase**” for fully reopening. The state will resume normal business operations when at least 50% of all Illinoisans 16+ (now at 28%) have received at least one dose. Face coverings will be required until the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says they are not needed.

Chicago is moving to Phase 1C of its vaccination schedule by March 29, opening up eligibility to people with certain underlying health conditions and other essential workers.

Per the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Human Services, Illinois Medicaid fee-for-service participants and HealthChoice Illinois managed care plan participants will not be turned down for COVID-19 vaccination services. In addition, COVID-19 vaccination services will be provided at no cost to uninsured individuals, regardless of patient income, citizenship, or immigration status. Non-emergency transportation services are available for Medicaid fee-for-service and HealthChoice Illinois managed care plan participants to travel to and from a vaccine administration location to receive their COVID-19 vaccination.

ICC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NAMED

Michael Merchant has been named executive director for the Illinois Commerce Commission, following Christy George's resignation. Merchant is the first African-American to fill the role and has served as assistant director at the Illinois Department of Central Management Services, leading the Business Enterprise Program.

ICC ENTERS CONSUMER PROTECTION AGREEMENT

The ICC has approved agreements to help electric, natural gas, water, and sewer residential customers hard hit by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to mitigate outstanding consumer debt and prevent disconnections before the voluntary winter moratorium on disconnections expires on March 31. Consumers struggling to pay their energy bill must call the utility to receive benefits and prevent disconnection. The stipulated agreements were negotiated and signed by ICC staff, the state's largest public utilities, and participating consumer advocate groups.

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

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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.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

April 19, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

The Illinois General Assembly reconvened in person last week at the State Capitol, following a two-week spring break. The House was in session four days – Tuesday through Friday. The Senate was in session three days – Tuesday through Thursday. Friday, April 16, was the deadline to pass substantive Senate Bills out of Senate committees.

Both chambers will return to session on Tuesday, April 20, at noon. The deadline to file a floor amendment to a Senate Bill in the Senate was Friday, April 16. The deadline to file a floor amendment to a House Bill in the House is Tuesday, April 20, at 4 PM. Friday, April 23 is the deadline to pass substantive bills out of their chamber of origin. Members have been advised to anticipate long days on the floor.

2021 KEY SESSION DATES

- 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 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.***

The Senate Higher Education Committee approved [Senate Bill 1832](#) (Pacione-Zayas), which allows community colleges to offer **bachelor degrees in early childhood**. The sponsor committed to bring an amendment back to the committee.

Senator Martwick has filed an **omnibus pension amendment** on [SB 1056](#). The amendment is currently pending in the Senate Assignments Committee.

Legislation to **elect the Chicago School Board** advanced this week. The Senate Executive Committee approved [SB 2497](#) (Martwick), which now heads to the full Senate for consideration. Companion legislation, [House Bill 2908](#) (Hernandez), passed the House by a vote of 71-39-3. HB 2908 now heads to the Senate. Senate Majority Leader Lightford filed Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot's legislation to create a hybrid appointed/elected Chicago School Board as an amendment to [SB 827](#). That amendment is pending in the Senate Assignments Committee.

The House Executive Committee unanimously approved [HB 642](#) (DeLuca), which statutorily enacts 10-year **Legislative Leader term limits**. Both the House and Senate Rules currently impose a 10-year term limit --though that requirement is not law. HB 642 heads to the full House for consideration.

The Senate has created an **Agreed Bill List** for non-controversial Senate Bills. This process allows for the bills to be considered on one roll call. Senators must notify the Secretary of the Senate if there are any bills for which they wish to be recorded as a "no" or "present" vote. Action on the Agreed Bill List is expected towards the end of next week.

CAMPAIGN FUNDRAISING REPORTS

Quarterly fundraising reports were due last week. Former House Speaker Michael Madigan spent more than \$2.5 million out of his campaign on legal fees this year. New House Speaker Chris Welch raised more than \$1.2 million in the first quarter of the year. House Democrats have \$967,000 cash, while House Republicans have \$196.92. (The House GOP will be switching to a new committee, so that may play a role in the low number. The new committee, House Republican Majority, reported \$48,000 in contributions. The HRO subsequently filed an A-1 for \$219,000.) Senate Democrats have \$1.1 million on hand, while Senate Republicans have about \$210,000. The Democratic Party of Illinois has \$2.6 million cash. The Illinois Republican Party has \$75,000 cash.

COVID-19 & VACCINE UPDATE

Like much of the nation, Illinois is once again experiencing a surge in COVID-19 with new cases, hospitalizations, ICU admissions and ventilator usage all on the rise. **Illinois' case positivity is 4.0%.**

The emergence and prevalence of **COVID variants** in central Illinois is concerning health officials. In the Peoria area, of 323 positive tests collected last month, 50 percent were the more contagious British B.117 variant. Even more alarming for health officials, 16 cases were the Brazilian P.1 variant -- which is vaccine-resistant and more contagious.

In accordance with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the Illinois Department of Public Health has paused the use of the **Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine**. Federal officials are reviewing data involving six reported U.S. cases of rare, severe blood clots in individuals who received the J&J vaccine. In total, 6.8 million Americans have received the one-shot vaccine. Illinois was expecting 17,000 doses of the J&J vaccine this week and another 5,800 next week. IDPH is urging providers to use the Moderna and Pfizer vaccine for any existing appointments impacted by the pause. Beginning Tuesday, the state will allocate 50,000 first doses of Pfizer and Moderna to the city of Chicago over the next seven days.

More than **26% of Illinoisans are now fully vaccinated**, according to IDPH. Vaccine eligibility expanded Monday to all persons over the age of 16. Illinois is averaging administering 125,212 doses of vaccine each day.

The Illinois High School Association announced that under IDPH updates, students competing in low-risk outdoor sports and activities are no longer required to wear **masks while competing**. In-season IHSA sports and activities impacted by this update include bass fishing, baseball, softball, tennis, and track & field. Students must continue to wear masks in these sports and activities when they are not actively competing (e.g., athletes on the bench). An updated version of the IDPH All-Sports Policy can be found [here](#).

Also of note, Senator Lightford tested positive for COVID-19 last week while in Springfield. She returned home and is participating remotely in committee hearings and session. A member of the Governor's staff and a member of Speaker Welch's staff also tested positive for COVID-19 last week.

FEDERAL COVID FUNDS

Gov. JB Pritzker, along with Speaker Welch and Senate President Harmon, penned an op-ed last week outlining their collective priorities for spending federal COVID relief funds. All three leaders agree that Illinois "needs to stay the course by managing our state and federal funds responsibly." To that end, their first priority is to pay off the state's remaining \$2.5 billion in COVID-related short-term borrowing. They are also dedicated to "spurring job creation and economic growth through accelerating infrastructure plans for rebuilding Illinois, supporting small businesses, and making sure educational and health care institutions thrive."

LEGISLATIVE SALARIES

Cook County Judge Allen Walker ruled late last week that two former Illinois state Senators – Michael Noland and James Clayborne, Jr. – are entitled to receive portions of their legislative salaries that were withheld by the Illinois Comptroller following the passage of a law to freeze cost-of-living increases and implement furlough days. Judge Walker ruled that the former legislators “were entitled to a clear right to receive wrongfully withheld portions of salaries.” The Illinois Constitution protects legislators’ salaries from being diminished during a term of service. Comptroller Mendoza has pledged to appeal the decision.

CYBERATTACK ON ATTORNEY GENERAL COMPUTERS

The computer systems at the offices of the Illinois Attorney General were breached last weekend. The agency is cooperating with investigators. No further information about the breach was released.

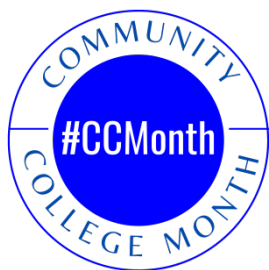
ZERO EMISSION GAS POWER PLANT

Net Power plans to build two natural gas power plants that will capture emissions and bury them underground. One of the world’s first zero emissions power plants may be built in Decatur in conjunction with Archer Daniels Midland, with the hopes of beginning operations in 2025. Richland Community College is expected to play a major role in training the technicians needed for facility operations.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

May 4, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

*The members of the Illinois General Assembly convened in Springfield last Tuesday through Thursday. After a very busy 3rd-reading-deadline rush, last week was much less hectic as legislators shifted their focus from passing bills to meeting in legislative working groups and reviewing map-making drafts. Over **800 bills** have been passed by at least one chamber and are now active in the second chamber. The House and Senate will convene this week to begin committee work on those bills. With only four more weeks before the scheduled May 31 adjournment of the spring session, there are still a lot of significant issues to be addressed, including the state budget, redistricting, ethics reform, and an energy package.*

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

BUDGET UPDATE: BILL BACKLOG DOWN TO 30-DAY CYCLE

Illinois' backlog of unpaid bills is down to about \$3.5 billion. The drop in the backlog — which, at its highest point, stood at \$16.7 billion in 2017 — means the state can now pay its bills as they come in and move closer to paying off its debts within a normal 30-day cycle. This backlog does not include the roughly \$3.6 billion borrowed from the Federal Reserve to pay medical bills accrued during the pandemic. The funds that the state will receive through the American Rescue Plan must first be used to pay off that borrowing. The Comptroller's office hopes that the reduction in the backlog could be good for the state's credit rating.

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.***

[House Bill 158](#) (Lilly/Hunter), the Black Caucus' **healthcare pillar** bill, has been signed into law. The bill contains a variety of provisions aimed at eliminating inequities in Illinois' health care system, especially for racial and ethnic minorities. The bill makes dozens of changes, creating a certification process for community health care workers and doulas, adjusting prescription monitoring programs meant to curb the opioid epidemic, creating a sickle cell anemia treatment and prevention program, etc. A similar version of this bill failed to pass in the previous General Assembly's lame duck session. The version signed into law does not contain provisions that would have scrapped the state's current Medicaid managed care system. An amendment was also added to the bill that expanded Illinois Department on Aging training requirements around dementia. Republicans in both the House and Senate opposed the bill, raising questions over its costs. Many of the bill's provisions are subject to appropriation, meaning they must be continually funded in the future. The bill is effective immediately.

[Senate Bill 1965](#) / [HB 3922](#) (Lightford/Ford) would make **Juneteenth National Freedom Day** the 13th official state holiday. If signed into law (Pritzker has indicated he supports the initiative), June 19 would be a school holiday and a paid day off for all state employees. If June 19 falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the holiday would be on the following Monday. It is not on the federal holiday calendar.

[SB 564](#) (Ellman) would require **history education** taught in 8th grade public schools, including the study of the contributions made by Muslims and Muslim Americans to society. It would also establish January 17 as a holiday commemorating the birthday of Muhammad Ali, one of the greatest American boxers and a convert to Islam. The bipartisan bill passed the Senate 46-3.

[SB 4](#) (Gillespie), a **comprehensive ethics reform bill**, has cleared the Senate. The bill would ban legislators from lobbying for pay at the state or municipal levels. It also makes consultants register as lobbyists; bans mayors and local elected officials from lobbying or consulting; bans former officers of the Executive branch, or General Assembly from lobbying for six months after leaving their office or for the remainder of their elected term if they leave office early; bans in-person and virtual fundraising in Sangamon County during session days as well as the day before and the day after; expands economic interest reports and includes all judges to the reporting requirements; and sets base amounts for economic interest reporting tied to the Consumer Price Index updated every five years.

[SB 808](#) (Murphy/Guzzardi) would eliminate the current requirement for **teacher candidates** to film themselves while in the classroom with students. SB 808 passed the Senate 47-5.

CENSUS REAPPORTIONMENT AND REDISTRICTING

The U.S. Census Bureau has announced that **Illinois will lose one seat** in the U.S. House of Representatives. Illinois lost 7,833 residents since 2010, for a total population of 12,822,739. At present, Illinois sends 18 members to Congress; under the new reapportionment, the delegation will drop to 17 members. Of the state's current U.S. House members, 13 are Democrats and five are Republicans. Reapportionment is the step that takes place before the mapmaking process. Each state gets at least one seat; after that, the remaining 385 seats are distributed according to population, with the aim to have about the same number of people in each district. California, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia are also losing one seat each. Florida, Colorado, Montana, North Carolina, and Oregon will be receiving one additional seat, while Texas will be receiving two. **Reapportionment is different from redistricting data**, which is a more granular breakdown of demographic data across Illinois. Release of redistricting data is still months away.

The next big question for the Illinois congressional delegation is: Which member of Congress will lose their district? Look for the new map, drawn by super-majority Democrats, to pit Illinois Republicans against each other in primaries to make up the one-seat loss. Rep. Adam Kinzinger has said that if Democrats carve up his district, he may instead run for senator or governor in 2022. Whether GOP Reps. Rodney Davis and Darin LaHood make statewide bids also may depend on the remap. Downstate freshman Rep. Mary Miller is also at risk in a remap. Democrats will also want to draw districts with more Democrats in it for Rep. Lauren Underwood and the 17th Congressional District (a seat currently held by retiring Rep. Cheri Bustos).

COVID-19 & VACCINE UPDATE

New COVID cases are stabilizing with a current statewide positivity rate of 3.3%.

Illinois has administered **nearly 9.5 million vaccine doses**, while just over **one-third (32.54%)** of the state's population has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Over half of the state's eligible population has received at least one dose. The state could reach the "bridge" phase of reopening next week, which will increase capacity limits at bars and restaurants and raise the cap for indoor social events to 250 people and outdoor to 500. Chicago is reopening the United Center and other outdoor venues.

The next step in the vaccine rollout is addressing vaccine hesitancy and enhancing community outreach. The number of people requesting vaccine appointments has dropped considerably. The Governor's office has

launched a state navigator program to boost vaccine access to low-income and vulnerable communities in cooperation with the Illinois Public Health Association, the Illinois Primary Health Care Association, and OSF Healthcare System.

As more of the state's population receives the vaccine, the state is considering beginning to shift from a "mass vaccination" approach to **"convenience vaccination" strategy**. This next phase could include allowing residents to get **vaccinated by their primary care physician** rather than needing to visit a mass vaccination site or pharmacy provider and allowing walk-in vaccinations at all vaccination sites.

The Illinois Department of Public Health is working on a program to allow residents vaccinated against COVID-19 to show a voluntary electronic certification from the state.

Chicago Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady is moving closer to announcing a bigger reopening plan. A vaccine passport, or a **"Vax Pass,"** is likely to be part of it. The Vax Pass would give those who are fully vaccinated access to concerts and other events in Chicago. The goal is to encourage vaccination, particularly in younger people, in exchange for attendance at concerts or other events.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Tuesday issued **new guidance on outdoor mask use** for fully vaccinated Americans. Persons who are fully vaccinated may now take their masks off at small outdoor gatherings, or when dining outside with friends from multiple households. The CDC is telling unvaccinated people that they still need to wear a mask at such gatherings. But life has not returned completely to normal for fully vaccinated people. The federal health agency says even fully vaccinated individuals should avoid large indoor gatherings. The CDC did not define how many people would be in a large gathering. Gov. J.B. Pritzker will revise his statewide mask mandate to align with new federal guidelines.

GOVERNOR RELEASED ENERGY OVERHAUL PROPOSAL

Governor Pritzker announced his version of an energy bill, [the Consumers and Climate First Act](#), to mandate phase out of coal power plants by 2030 and natural gas plants by 2045 while providing short-term support of Exelon's Byron and Dresden nuclear plants. The phaseout would be prompted with \$8 per ton carbon charges on emissions from fossil fuel plants. The bill also pushes for electrification of transportation by offering \$4,000 rebates for electric vehicle customers and requiring utilities to submit transportation electrification plans to the ICC. The administration pledges to meet the goal of 100% clean energy by 2050, increasing the Renewable Portfolio Standard by 40% by 2030, and obtaining 1 million registered electric vehicles by 2030. Representative Kam Buckner and Senator Celina Villanueva will sponsor the bills.

GAMING UPDATE

Illinois has overtaken Pennsylvania to become the third largest sports wagering market in the US, after New Jersey and Nevada. Illinois also now has 39,149 video gaming machines operating at 7,532 active licensed locations. A total of 104 new location licenses were approved at the most recent Illinois Gaming Board meeting.

The Illinois House Executive Committee, under the leadership of committee chair and House gaming negotiator Rep. Bob Rita, heard testimony on several ideas to change state gaming laws. No bills were considered for a vote, but the testimony will be used to help develop gaming proposals ahead of the May 31 scheduled end of session. Some of the topics included allowing iGaming, banning towns from creating push taxes, banning sweepstakes machines, and permitting college sports betting. Rita wants lawmakers and companies to look at gaming as an issue that can be revisited in each legislative session instead of one large gaming package every 20 years.

INDEPENDENT REPORT ON THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK AT LASALLE VETERANS HOME

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs has released an independent report requested by the Governor's office last fall to fully investigate a COVID-19 outbreak at the LaSalle Veterans home that led to 36 deaths. The report details systemic mismanagement from the top down to the home's leadership, which created an "inefficient, reactive and chaotic" response to controlling the virus. The 50-page report says then-VA Director Linda Chapa LaVia "abdicated" her responsibilities, leaving things to a non-medical chief of staff who preferred to let each home manage itself, while issuing rules contradictory to health guidelines and failing to seek outside help as the outbreak grew.

LAKE SHORE CAUCUS

A group of legislators have formed the Lake Shore Drive Caucus to focus on the impact of climate change on erosion along Lake Shore Drive.

ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUSES

Illinois will award \$9 million in grants to electrify school buses in the Chicagoland and Metro East areas as part of the funding from the multi-billion dollar settlement in the federal Volkswagen settlement. The administration will revamp its [VW Beneficiary Mitigation Plan](#) to replace diesel engines with all-electric school buses, public transit, and infrastructure projects.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

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 and 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.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

May 17, 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 17 at 4 PM, and the House will reconvene Tuesday, May 18 at noon. Approximately two weeks remain in the spring 2021 legislative session. Nearly 800 bills await floor action in the opposite chamber, so lawmakers will be busy debating and voting on bills in addition to the work needed to complete a budget and redistricting maps. Other major issues that could be addressed before adjournment include energy overhaul legislation, ethics reform, and proposals to diversity the recreational marijuana industry.

ICCTA BILL LIST

***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 21 Senate deadline for substantive House bills to pass out of committee
- May 28 Deadline for 3rd reading of substantive bills (both chambers)
- May 31 Memorial Day / Adjournment

FY 2022 BUDGET

Lawmakers are working on developing Illinois' operating budget for FY 2022. Illinois continues to receive positive news on how well the economy is recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to more people heading back to work and companies making sales, the economy is edging back to a sense of normalcy. Lawmakers are currently looking at filling a \$1.3 billion hole in the budget. Appropriations working groups are meeting to go through each of the over 12,000 spending lines in the budget. Meanwhile, the business community continues to demand that the General Assembly reject **Gov. JB Pritzker's** \$900+ million in "corporate tax loophole" closures.

House Majority Leader **Greg Harris** (D-Chicago) has said that one of the things lawmakers will do is use about \$690 million in federal COVID relief aid to pay the first installment of the state's \$2+ billion Municipal Liquidity Facilities debt owed to the Federal Reserve. It remains unclear how the state will get that done since the [U.S. Treasury announced](#) that federal relief funds cannot be used to pay off debt. Gov. Pritzker and members of the Illinois congressional delegation are asking Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen to reverse course and allow a portion of Illinois's \$8.1 billion in federal COVID relief funds (exceeding the expected \$7.5 billion announced in March) to pay off debt incurred during the pandemic.

GOMB ISSUES REVISED, IMPROVED REVENUE ESTIMATES

The Governor's Office of Management and Budget has increased its General Funds revenue estimates by \$1.469 billion for FY21 and by \$842 million for FY22, compared to the estimates published with the Governor's introduced budget in February 2021. Strong year-to-date receipts in the state's main revenue sources (individual and corporate income tax and sales tax) have led GOMB to revise its estimates. The full report is available [here](#).

LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

Democrat leaders developing the maps have been bringing other Democrats into the remap room to take a look at their new districts. Republicans have been in the press almost daily complaining the Democrats are not being transparent and are not drawing "fair" maps. On April 26, the U.S. Census Bureau announced the resident

population statistics for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, as well as congressional apportionment data from the 2020 Census. While this data is critical in determining the total number of U.S. Representatives for each state, community-specific population data is not yet available. The Census Bureau estimates that full data will be available late this summer or early fall.

MOD CAUCUS

Democratic state Rep. **Frances Ann Hurley** is joining the Illinois House leadership ranks, having been named a new whip of the Democratic Moderate Caucus (Mod Caucus). Speaker **Emanuel “Chris” Welch**’s team describes the group as “a relatively new caucus of like-minded members who advocate for a balanced, steady approach to lawmaking.”

OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST

[House Bill 12](#) (Costa Howard/Villivalam) would expand coverage of the Family and Medical Leave Act to education support professionals. Currently, to be eligible for FMLA an employee must have worked 1,250 hours during the previous year. This disqualifies many educational support staff from meeting the requirements of FMLA due to the limited number of days they work during a school year. HB 12 reduces the minimum threshold to 1,000 hours. Education support professionals are support staff in schools like secretaries, teachers’ aides, paraeducators, maintenance workers, school bus drivers and cafeteria workers.

[HB 36](#) (Stuart) is an effort to reduce the fee on small trailers back to \$18. The fee for small trailers in 2018 was \$18. That increased to \$118 as part of the capital construction bill enacted in 2019. Illinoisans have apparently decided not to comply. “According to the Secretary of State we had 150,000 fewer trailer license applicants last year compared to the previous year and I worry that we’re going to see that number continue to decrease as people don’t register their trailers,” Stuart said.

[HB 40](#) (Hurley/Cunningham) would change how students using special education services age out of the program. Under current Illinois law, special needs students lose their eligibility and are removed from school the day before they turn 22. HB 40 allows students in special education to be eligible for services throughout the entire school year in which they turn 22, allowing them to graduate at the same time as their peer group.

[Senate Bill 817](#) (Simmons/Harris) was amended to prohibit all Illinois schools from making dress code requirements that prohibit hairstyles historically associated with race, ethnicity or hair texture. The legislation specifically cites braids, locks and twists as hairstyles protected by the statute. Many Democrats expressed opposition to an earlier version of the bill that would have withheld the allocation of dollars from the state’s evidence-based funding model for education from school districts that were non-compliant with the bill – that provision has been removed. The bill cleared the Senate 40-13 and now heads to the House.

COVID-19 & VACCINE UPDATE

Illinois is seeing the lowest number of COVID-19 cases and other metrics since the beginning of the pandemic. The 7-day case positivity rate decreased from 3.0% last week to 2.4% this week.

Beginning Friday, May 14, Illinois entered the “[Bridge Phase](#),” which is the next-to-last phase of Gov. Pritzker’s coronavirus reopening plan and is a precursor to all restrictions being lifted. Under Bridge Phase, there are expanded capacity limits for businesses, dining, offices, events, conferences and gatherings. The last phase, Phase 5, could happen as soon as June 11.

Updated guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention remove the need for masks or social distancing for those who are fully vaccinated and also allow those individuals to go without a mask in crowds

outdoors. The Governor has announced that he will revise his statewide mask mandate to align with the new federal guidance. The city of Chicago will also “broadly” follow the CDC’s instructions.

How to determine who is fully vaccinated, and keeping track of capacity limits, is largely being left up to individual businesses. Chicago has considered the idea of vaccine passports for some events, but Gov. Pritzker has rejected the idea of requiring such a passport.

The number of Illinois residents who have been fully vaccinated is nearing 40% of the total population. More than 64% of those 18 and up have received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine.

The Pritzker administration is hoping incentives like free tickets to Six Flags Great America amusement parks in Gurnee and Rockford will help breathe new life into the vaccination effort. The Illinois National Guard is also planning vaccination clinics at the Gurnee theme park the first weekend in June, with more to come if turnout is good. Demand for shots could increase in the coming days as providers began administering Pfizer’s two-dose vaccine to children ages 12 to 15 last Thursday.

CONGRESS CONSIDERING INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS

Congressional leadership on both sides of the aisle are discussing a potential infrastructure package. President Biden previously released the [American Jobs Plan](#), which proposes to spend nearly \$2.3 trillion on various priorities, including surface transportation, broadband expansion, and water and wastewater infrastructure. Senate Republicans subsequently [proposed their own framework](#) for a potential infrastructure package, which would spend \$568 billion in five years.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS RAPID TESTS TO BE USED AT SCHOOLS THIS FALL

In an effort to ensure that in-person learning can fully resume as quickly and safely as possible, the Illinois Department of Public Health announced a \$225 million investment to expand access to covidSHIELD testing to middle and high schools across the state at low or no cost. The covidSHIELD test, which was developed by the University of Illinois, is a saliva-based test that quickly detects the virus that causes COVID-19, including in people who are not exhibiting symptoms. Test results are available within 12-24 hours after the sample reaches the lab. The specimens will be collected at each participating school, and parental consent is required.

ILLINOIS LAUNCHES TOURISM CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTING ROAD TRIPS

As the number of Illinoisans vaccinated for COVID-19 increases, Illinois is launching a new tourism campaign highlighting driving as a safe way to enjoy state businesses, parks, and other attractions. Gov. Pritzker unveiled the “Time for Me to Drive” campaign at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield. He said that vaccines have provided a safe way for many to return to life as normal this summer. The Illinois Tourism Office within the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is also offering 60 unique itineraries to help visitors plan their trip to the state. DCEO is working with stakeholders and convention and visitor bureaus around Illinois to develop additional tourism and hospitality recovery plans.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

May 25, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

Last week the Illinois Senate convened from Monday through Friday and the House convened from Tuesday through Friday. Legislators spent most of their time moving bills and amendments through committees and meeting in working groups to discuss details on the big issues such as the new legislative maps, the state budget, energy overhaul, ethics reform, and recreational marijuana.

The deadline to pass bills out of the second chamber is this Friday, May 28, leaving little time for the chamber of origin to consider legislation for concurrence before the scheduled adjournment on Memorial Day, May 31. Both the House and the Senate are heavily relying on agreed bill lists – both in committees and for floor votes. Lawmakers returned to Springfield yesterday (Monday, May 24) and will remain in session every day until May 31.

ICCTA BILL LIST

***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 28 Deadline for 3rd reading of substantive bills (both chambers)
- May 31 Memorial Day / Adjournment

LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

New maps for the Illinois House and Senate were released late Friday. [Click here](#) for the new Illinois House maps. [Click here to see](#) the Senate maps. To compare them to the existing maps, click [here](#) for the Chicago-area and [here](#) for the rest of the state.

There will be four hearings on the proposed maps:

- Tuesday, May 25 at 4:00 PM – Joint House and Senate Hearing
- Tuesday, May 25 at 6:00 PM – House Hearing
- Wednesday, May 26 at 4:00 PM – Joint House and Senate Hearing
- Wednesday, May 26 at 6:00 PM – Senate Hearing

FY 2022 BUDGET

Governor Pritzker, Comptroller Mendoza, and General Assembly leaders announced that they will be presenting a **budget** that does not rely on money from the federal American Rescue Plan Act to pay off the remaining \$2 billion of emergency borrowing, thanks partly to Illinois's strong economic rebound. The state borrowed \$3.2 billion from the federal Municipal Liquidity Facility for cash management and to pay for essential state operations at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The loan was scheduled to be repaid in three installments by December 2023. Instead, the Comptroller will utilize the state's revenue overperformance to pay off the debt in its entirety within the next budget year. Early repayment of the borrowing will save taxpayers up to \$100 million in interest costs.

With state funds paying off the debt, Gov. Pritzker and Democratic leaders say that it is essential to **close corporate tax loopholes** to find \$1.3 billion in order to avoid budget cuts in education, higher education, and

human services. Republicans disagree with this point, arguing that programs labeled as “tax loopholes” are meant to help small businesses and families. The **\$8.1 billion coming to Illinois from ARPA** will be distributed in a spending plan to help communities recover via affordable housing, mental health and substance use services, and upgrades to safety net hospitals.

ETHICS REFORM

Two competing **ethics bills** have been filed in the Senate. Sen. John Curran (Downers Grove-R) introduced [Senate Bill 1350](#) as the Republican ethics reform proposal. [SB 4](#), introduced by Sen. Ann Gillespie (Arlington Heights-D), is the Democrats' proposal for ethics reform and is pending on the Senate floor for a vote, despite passing committee unanimously about a month ago. Each bill has similar proposals to accomplish the same goals, but there are some key differences. SB 4 has been the subject of negotiations between the chairs of the Senate and House ethics committees. Sen. Gillespie indicated that further changes may be made before the bill comes up for a vote. House Speaker Welch recently stated he is confident ethics reform will get done this session.

RECREATIONAL MARIJUANA

[House Bill 1443](#), a **marijuana licensing bill**, is a follow-up to the landmark bill that passed in 2019 legalizing and regulating the sale and use of recreational marijuana. Under that law, dispensaries already licensed to sell medical marijuana immediately became eligible to apply for recreational-use licenses, while several other licenses were set aside for “social equity” applicants. If HB 1443 becomes law, there is hope that a long-awaited lottery will take place and that two additional lotteries for cannabis licenses would also be held: one that focuses specifically for social equity applicants, and another that would accommodate those who were left out of last year’s lottery because of scoring mishaps. The bill passed out of the House Executive Committee by a vote of 15-0. It now heads to the full House for consideration.

ENERGY OVERHAUL

After two years of negotiations, stakeholders are meeting regularly to discuss an **energy overhaul bill**. Exelon continues to push for \$586 million in subsidies to support its nuclear fleet, as opposed to Gov. Pritzker’s offer of \$70 million a year. Exelon is now also saying that it will need to close two more nuclear plants, in addition to the Byron and Dresden plants slated for closures this fall, without the subsidies. Nuclear energy is an essential part of any plan for the state to reach its carbon-free energy goal by 2050.

“SHOT AND A BEER” VACCINE PROMOTIONS

[SB 104](#) (Feigenholtz-D/Zalewski-D) – the **“shot and a beer”** bill – would allow a bar to offer a single drink of alcoholic liquor at no cost to a customer as part of a publicly advertised promotion to encourage participation in any COVID-19 vaccination program if the customer provides proof of COVID-19 vaccination received at any time.

“WORKERS RIGHTS” CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

[House Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 34](#) cleared the House Labor & Commerce Committee 21-3-1, while [Senate Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 11](#) passed the Senate Executive Committee 12-3 and the full Senate 49-7. Both resolutions are proposed constitutional amendments that would **prohibit “right to work”** laws and ordinances.

NON-COMPETE CLAUSES

[SB 1838](#) (Hunter-D) was amended this week to expand the Illinois Freedom to Work Act to employees at salaries below \$75,000 and makes changes to **non-compete clauses**. The senate bill is on third reading in the Senate.

COVID-19 & VACCINE UPDATE

Illinois' 7-day case positivity rate continues to decrease and has fallen from 2.5% last week to **2.1%** this week. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the state has identified a total of 1,377,249 cases of COVID-19, including 22,650 deaths.

In addition, **65% of Illinois adults have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose and 49% of Illinois adults are fully vaccinated**, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Illinois is now in the "bridge phase" with full reopening planned for June 11.

The state is no longer requiring fully vaccinated people to wear face masks in most situations, putting Illinois in line with new federal guidance. Gov. Pritzker issued a [new executive order](#) to update state policy. Chicago's health department issued a statement "strongly advis[ing] businesses to verify that individuals are fully vaccinated" and to keep masking policies in place until Chicago lifts all pandemic restrictions.

ISBE BOARD TO REQUIRE SCHOOLS TO BE FULL-TIME IN THE FALL

The Illinois State Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution last Wednesday calling on all public schools to return to in-person learning during the upcoming school year. The resolution does not institute any mandates or requirements for Illinois schools to follow but shows unified support from ISBE for an upcoming decision by State Superintendent Carmen Ayala. In a weekly blog posted to the ISBE website, Superintendent Ayala said that she plans to make the mandate official "at the conclusion of the current academic year," meaning the change will not take effect until next school year.

The CDC has said it will issue updated guidance for schools "in the coming weeks" to help with planning for the fall. In the meantime, the CDC has said that schools should still require face coverings for the rest of this school year, even as fully vaccinated people are allowed to unmask in more public settings.

\$20.7 BILLION CONSTRUCTION PLAN THROUGH REBUILD ILLINOIS

Gov. Pritzker has announced the release of a \$20.7 billion multi-year plan to improve Illinois' roads and bridges over the next six years. Based on current funding levels, the [FY2022-27 Proposed Highway Improvement Program](#) aims to improve 2,779 miles of roads and 7.9 million square feet of bridge deck. Also included in the plan are \$5.7 billion for highway reconstruction and preservation, \$4.8 billion for bridge improvements, \$2.5 billion for strategic expansion, \$1.4 billion for system support such as engineering and land acquisition, and \$1.2 billion for safety and system modernizations. Of the \$20.7 billion over the six years of the program, \$3.32 billion has been identified for the upcoming fiscal year.

FULL AMTRAK SERVICE RESUMES IN ILLINOIS

Full Amtrak service will resume in Illinois beginning July 19. In accordance with CDC guidance, face masks are still required on public transit, including trains, to prevent community spread of COVID-19.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

May 25, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

With four days remaining in the legislative session, lots of bills are being sent to the Governor, but there is still a lot of work for the General Assembly to complete. In addition to the large issues discussed below, other issues will likely emerge in the final days, possibly including an election omnibus bill, a procurement clean-up bill, and others.

LEGISLATIVE REDISTRICTING

Late last Friday, Illinois Democrats released **draft legislative maps** of proposed Illinois House and Senate districts that they intend to pass by the end of session on May 31. The second round of draft legislative maps released by House and Senate Democrats on Thursday evening includes several changes suggested by community organizations during four redistricting hearings, as well as changes to eliminate some potential primary races between incumbent Republicans. In their release, Democrats specifically say they used data from the American Community Survey's 5-year estimate for 2019 to craft the maps, which they say varies just 0.3 percent from the state's official population count from the U.S. Census Bureau. They also acknowledged the use of 'public election data' in drawing the maps.

The latest House map can be found [HERE](#). The latest Senate map can be found [HERE](#).

In the new maps, 14 incumbent representatives (down from 24 in the original map) and four senators have been drawn into the same districts. Just three of those 18 officials are Democrats, while the remainder are Republicans. Originally, the redrawn House District 107 would have forced a four-way primary between Reps. Dan Caulkins (R-Decatur), Brad Halbrook (R-Shelbyville), Blaine Wilhour (R-Effingham), and Adam Niemerg (R-Teutopolis). The revised map leaves Caulkins and Halbrook in the 107th, moving Wilhour (in the new 110) and Niemerg (in the new 102) into their own districts. In addition to the pairings, many districts have been altered to help Democrats.

Other **House district pairs** include:

46th District: Deb Conroy (D-46) and Deanne Mazzochi (R-47)

47th District: Amy Grant (R-42) and Seth Lewis (R-45)

50th District: Keith Wheeler (R-50) and Dan Ugaste (R-65)

51st District: Chris Bos (R-51) and Thomas Morrison (R-54)

~~69th District: Joe Sosnowski (R-69) and Jeff Keicher (R-70)~~ revised map: these Reps are in their own districts

~~87th District: Keith Sommer (R-88) and Mark Luft (R-91)~~ revised map: these Reps are in their own districts

90th District: Tony McCombie (R-71) and Andrew Chesney (R-89)

99th District: Randy Frese (R-94) and C.D. Davidsmeyer (R-100)

108th District: Avery Bourne (R-95th) and Mike Murphy (R-99)

~~115th District: Charles Meier (R-108) and David Friess (R-116)~~ revised map: these Reps are in their own districts

In **Senate pairings**, the only potential new Democratic primary race would be in Senate District 23 between Sen. Thomas Cullerton (D-Villa Park) and Sen. Suzanne Glowiak (D-Oakbrook Terrace).

The new 55th District would pair Sen. Jason Plummer (R-54) and Sen. Darren Bailey (R-55). Sen. Bailey has announced his campaign for Governor and cannot run for both offices, forcing him to choose.

Democrats hold a 73-45 majority in the House and 41-18 advantage in the Senate based on maps they drew a decade ago, so Republicans are on the outside of the process, looking in. But mapmaking could play into other end-of-session issues.

The **Illinois Supreme Court remap** plan can be found [HERE](#), reflecting population shifts over the nearly 60 years since the map was last drawn in 1963. This new map will not impact the tenure of the current Appellate and Supreme Court justices. All justices running for retention will have the right to do so in their current districts. Additionally, the remap avoided changing the compositions or boundaries of the Judicial Circuits. The new map does, however, impact which precedents apply to which areas of the state. Republicans charge the Democrats have initiated this first in almost 60-year judicial remap in reaction to their third district retention loss in 2020 and concern that they could lose that seat to the Republicans in 2022.

U.S. congressional maps have not yet been released. There has been discussion that the **2022 primary could be delayed** to accommodate national Democrats. Without detailed census data, Democratic leaders recognize they could face added legal challenges in drawing congressional maps. A legal battle is already likely as the legislative maps are being drawn with census estimates, instead of hard numbers still months away from being released. Drawing congressional maps without census data give critics a stronger legal argument.

Redistricting bills to watch: Senate Bill 642 (Supreme Court), House Bill 1980/SB 277 (Legislature), House Resolution 359, Senate Resolution 326

FY 2022 STATE BUDGET

The annual **budget negotiations** in some ways are being overshadowed by discussions of how to spend \$8.1 billion in federal coronavirus relief from President Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan. Gov. JB Pritzker and some lawmakers in both parties have cautioned against using the federal COVID relief money to set up programs that would create an ongoing expense. A possible one-time use being discussed is replenishing the pandemic-depleted unemployment insurance trust fund, which is looking at a \$5 billion deficit. Some want to take more time in deciding how to use the money, which can be spent over several years.

Budget teams are looking at two separate paths to deal with the \$1.3 billion deficit; however, some suggest the projected budget deficit for the coming fiscal year is now in the neighborhood of \$600-800 million. One path is spending cuts; the other is following Gov. Pritzker's proposal to raise \$932 million in new revenue by making a series of changes to business tax policies. Those tax changes are opposed by Republicans and do not have universal Democratic backing. A combination of cuts and new revenue is the likely conclusion. Some of those initial "corporate tax loopholes" remain under consideration, such as capping the corporate net operating loss deduction at \$100K a year, rolling back a federal depreciation break, and treating foreign-source dividends like domestic-source dividends. The plan to reduce the tax credit for private school scholarships may be off the table.

Bills to watch for appropriation language: SB 2800 & HB 900

ETHICS AND ENERGY

Amid an ongoing federal corruption investigation looking into ComEd, the intertwined issues of government lobbying and **ethics laws** and state **energy policy** are marquee topics for the spring session. Several proposals have been introduced. Gov. Pritzker's proposal pairs limited subsidies for nuclear plants with what he describes as strong ethics and accountability provisions. The plan also calls for the state to get 100% of its power from carbon-free sources by 2050 and aims to ramp up electrical vehicle infrastructure. The governor also has called for an overhaul of state ethics laws but recently has played up the utility accountability provisions in his energy

proposal. Senate Democrats introduced a broad ethics overhaul last month ([SB 4](#)), but it was greeted with skepticism by Republicans, good-government groups, and the Legislative Inspector General, and it has not cleared the Senate. On Wednesday, **federal prosecutors charged Tim Mapes**, former Speaker Madigan's chief of staff from 1991 until June 2018, with perjury and attempted obstruction of justice amid the ongoing bribery investigation of ComEd. Mapes' indictment prompted reaction from legislators to double down on their call for ethics reform.

CANNABIS INDUSTRY LICENSING

Illinois' **retail cannabis industry** will expand once [HB 1443](#) (Ford/Lightford) has passed both chambers and is signed by the Governor. The bill aims to correct a flawed license lottery system that has prevented minority residents from being able to open businesses. Under the bill, 110 new cannabis licenses will be awarded through two lotteries targeted toward Black, Hispanic and other minority residents of disproportionately impacted areas. As part of the qualifying criteria, one of the lotteries will prioritize those previously arrested or convicted of previous cannabis-related offenses. The new licenses will be in addition to a batch of 75 licenses intended to have been released in 2020 that have been delayed due to litigation and issues with the selection process' scoring system. HB 1443 passed 70-33 in the House, where both Republicans and Democrats voted against the bill, questioning whether the lottery process would actually award licenses to minority community members.

NON-COMPETE CLAUSES

[SB 672](#) (Hunter/Burke) was amended this week to expand the Illinois Freedom to Work Act to employees at salaries below \$75,000 and makes changes to **non-compete clauses**. In addition, it prohibits covenants not to solicit employees making \$45,00. The amendment also nullifies covenants not to compete for employees terminated, furloughed, or laid off because of the COVID 19 pandemic. The bill passed out of the House Labor committee unanimously and is pending on the House floor. If SB 672 passes the House, it will need to be sent back to the Senate for concurrence.

WAGE UNDERPAYMENT PENALTIES

[HB 118](#) (Guzzardi/Villa) passed out of the Senate by a vote of 40-15-0 and has now passed both chambers. This bill provides that an employee is entitled to recover damages of 5% (rather than 2%) of the amount of any underpayments in wages for each month following the date of payment during which such underpayments remain unpaid.

'WORKERS RIGHTS' CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

[SJRC 11](#) will be on the ballot in November 2022. The resolution passed both chambers with bipartisan support – 11 Senate Republicans and 9 House Republicans joined Democrats in supporting the change. Under the proposal, employees would have a "fundamental right to organize and bargain collectively" over wages, hours, working and safety conditions, and their economic welfare. It would ban any law or local ordinance that interferes with or diminishes the right to collectively bargain.

SOCIAL MEDIA LITERACY

[HB 234](#) (Hernandez/Villa) would require public high schools in the state to offer instruction in how to understand and evaluate news and social media as part of their computer literacy courses. HB 234 passed both houses.

COVID-19 & VACCINE UPDATE

Illinois' COVID-19 testing positivity rate is at the **lowest point ever – 1.9%**. In the early weeks of the pandemic, the state's average figure soared past 20%, then dropped as low as 2.5% last summer. By mid-fall, it was skyrocketing again up to 13.2%.

More than 66% of Illinois adults have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose and more than 49% of Illinois adults are fully vaccinated, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

STATEWIDE SYSTEM TO MONITOR COVID-19 IN WASTEWATER

Illinois is working on a statewide system to monitor the virus that causes COVID-19 and its variants in wastewater, providing public health officials with early warnings of a potential outbreak on a county-by-county basis. SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is detectable in human waste nearly from the onset of infection, while symptoms may not appear for three to five days. The Illinois Department of Public Health is providing \$5.5 million to build and support the monitoring system for the next year. Together IDPH and Discovery Partners Institute will implement the program in phases, starting with sampling and analysis in 10 Illinois counties, expanding to 35 counties in mid-summer, and to all 102 Illinois counties by the end of the year. The 10 counties include Carroll, Cass, Franklin, Fulton, Jefferson, Lawrence, Livingston, Macon, Montgomery, and Vermilion.

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

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ICCTA's 2021 Illinois General Assembly End-of-Session Review

June 7, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

*****Please see [ICCTA's BILL LIST](#) for the status of community-college-related legislation*****

The 102nd Illinois General Assembly made history before it even began by: 1) electing a new Speaker of the House for the first time in 38 years; and 2) electing its first Black Speaker, Emanuel “Chris” Welch. Senate President Don Harmon had just taken over leadership of the Senate Democrats within the past year, and the Senate Republicans chose a new leader with Dan McConchie. House Republican Leader Jim Durkin became the “senior” of the four caucus leaders.

The 2021 spring session looked different in other ways, too, with the COVID pandemic still strong in Illinois in January. Throughout session, committee hearings were all held virtually, and lobbyists had very limited access to lawmakers at the State Capitol. Despite the challenges of tele-legislating, however, the General Assembly still considered over 7,500 bills and resolutions this spring. By adjournment, lawmakers passed 650 bills to the Governor for his consideration – two years’ worth of pent-up legislating.

From the onset, the **state budget** and **redistricting map** were the two major issues facing legislators in 2021. Democrats ultimately passed a \$42 billion budget and capital spending plan in [Senate Bill 2800](#). The [House](#) and [Senate](#) district maps and a new [Supreme Court](#) district map were passed and will be signed by Gov. JB Pritzker. Court cases challenging the constitutionality of the maps are expected, with the Illinois Supreme Court eventually deciding final approval of the maps. Petitions for running for office in specific districts will open January 13, 2022 with the spring 2022 primary election moved to June 28, 2022 ([SB 825](#)). Petitions for races will be filed beginning March 7, and early voting will open May 19. The Congressional district map will not be drawn until U.S. Census data is complete later this summer.

The legislature ended the 2021 session after passing several major initiatives: ethics reform, an election omnibus bill, telehealth, reform to recreational cannabis licensing, a Medicaid omnibus bill, affordable housing reform, two new state holidays (Election Day & Juneteenth), and several other bills detailed below. The General Assembly has 30 days to send legislation to the Governor, and the Governor has 60 days to act on the legislation or it becomes law.

We expect the General Assembly **to reconvene again as early as next week** to take up the energy bill. There was no veto session calendar released. Other outstanding issues include [SB 521](#) (gaming), [House Bill 562](#) (FOID), and [HB 2908](#) (elected Chicago School Board).

STATE BUDGET

With higher-than-expected post-COVID incoming revenues, federal COVID relief, and stimulus checks sent directly to residents, Illinois’ finances look much better than expected going into Fiscal Year 2022. The **\$42 billion budget** pays off the remaining \$2 billion loan from the Federal Reserve and spends another \$1 billion in capital projects, jumpstarting projects from the 2019 Rebuild Illinois capital plan. Democrat lawmakers presented what they consider a balanced budget that does not include tax

increases, pays down the unpaid bill backlog and interfund borrowing, does not cut the Local Government Distributive fund (which helps direct money to cities and towns), funds the additional \$350 million in the school funding formula, and fully funds the FY22 pension contribution of \$9.4 billion. The Governor's staff and legislative budgeteers hope the new budget will result in a credit upgrade for the state.

The “**corporate loopholes**” closed in [SB 2017](#) (the budget implementation bill, or BIMP) includes capping the corporate net operating loss deduction at \$100,000 per year, rolling back a federal depreciation offset, treating foreign-source dividends like domestic-source dividends, and freezing the phaseout of the corporate franchise tax. All in, these changes are valued at \$650 million in savings. Ultimately, the General Assembly determined that the state will NOT reduce the tax credit for private school scholarships, stop the acceleration of eliminating the biodiesel exemption, cap retailers' subsidies for collecting sales taxes, or pause the Blue Collar Jobs program.

Total categories for this budget are:

- K-12 education - \$9.2 billion
- Higher education - \$1.9 billion
- Public safety- \$1.9 billion
- Human services - \$7.4 billion
- Government general services - \$1.4 billion
- Medicaid - \$7.5 billion
- Debt services - \$1.781 billion

Roughly \$1.5 billion of the \$8.1 billion from the **American Rescue Plan Act** funds from the federal government are allocated this year for programs including violence prevention, youth employment programming, mental health and substance abuse programs, economic recovery and small and impacted business support, public health response support, building stronger community programs like affordable housing, and education programs. Another \$1 billion of ARPA funds are allocated for **infrastructure spending**. The remaining \$5.6 billion in relief funds will be allocated over the next three years.

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services will receive \$180 million of the ARPA allocation to **support Illinois hospitals**, \$30 million of which is dedicated to safety-net hospitals. Over \$37 million is allocated to 14 specific hospitals in the Medicaid managed care program and another \$31.5 million to 12 other hospitals.

For **higher education**, the budget provides funding for public universities, community colleges, and adult education at the same level as was appropriated in FY2021. Funding for MAP grants increases \$28 million to keep up with demand. The budget also includes significant investments in federal relief funds:

- \$27 million for community colleges from the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER) to overcome barriers created by the pandemic and support student learning renewal
- \$25 million to support rapid expansion of the early childhood workforce and implementation of an Early Childhood Education Consortium ([HB 2878](#))
- \$10 million State Coronavirus Urgent Remediation Emergency Fund for college bridge programs

New **Medicaid funding** is included for veteran support specialists, an ALL Kids expansion (and transfer into the regular Medicaid program), chiropractic services, family and clinical counseling, non-citizen kidney transplant services, certified community behavioral health clinics, hospital inpatient overdose and observation status, pediatric vaccination rate increase, dental rate increase, one-time supportive living per diem rate increase, tobacco cessation services, technology/wheelchair repair increase, a new senior PACE Program, undocumented elderly patients from 55-64, and long-lasting injectable medication coverage for mental health and substance abuse.

REDISTRICTING

By holding supermajorities in both the House and Senate, holding the Governor's office, and also having a majority of justices on the state Supreme Court, Democrats passed new legislative maps that they hope will help them maintain control for the next decade. Due to the pandemic and the delay in U.S. Census data, Democrats based district boundaries and population counts on American Community Survey data, which Republicans argued was not official data. The GOP also lamented the lack of transparency with Democrats preparing maps behind closed doors. They especially targeted Gov. Pritzker for his flip from campaigning for a nonpartisan, independent commission and pledging to veto any map that was not drawn fairly to announcing his agreement that the Democrats could draw a map without any nonpartisan guidance.

The maps passed by the Democrats place several incumbent Republicans in districts with their colleagues, meaning they will have to run against each other in the primary elections or move to a new district. Gov. Pritzker signed the three bills into law on June 4: [SB 642](#) (Supreme Court), [HB 2777](#) (General Assembly), and [SB 2661](#) (Cook County Board of Review). The General Assembly will need to return to session later this year after the U.S. Census data is released to pass a **Congressional district map** and possibly amend the General Assembly and Supreme Court maps based on the official data.

ENERGY

One of the most anticipated bills of the session (with negotiations ongoing for more than a year) was an energy omnibus bill. At least five different versions were initiated: Gov. Pritzker's Consumers and Climate First Act, the Climate Union Jobs Act, the Clean Energy Jobs Act, the Downstate Clean Energy Affordability Act, and the Path to 100 Act.

Competing interests included environmental groups pushing for less carbon emissions and a date certain for reaching 100% carbon-free electricity; labor and minority caucuses pushing for union jobs and racial equity, respectively; and Exelon's request for state subsidies to support its nuclear fleet. Exelon had previously announced that two nuclear plants (Byron and Dresden) would close this fall without state support and then later indicated that another two plants could be shut down, as well. Both plants account for 30% of the state's carbon-free energy supply and employ 1,500 workers. Exelon reported that replacing nuclear energy with renewables and storage to achieve the same amount of zero emissions energy would cost consumers \$80 billion.

According to reports, an agreement was reached to provide Exelon with \$700 million in ratepayer subsidies over five years. However, no bill language was ever introduced or circulated, and while there

have been several sources claiming a “deal” has been made on an overall package, the terms of the deal are still murky -- leaving many stakeholders still in the dark. Ultimately, the General Assembly ended its spring session on June 1 without passing an omnibus energy bill, but leadership indicated lawmakers will return to Springfield “hopefully sooner rather than later” as work continues on the energy issue.

HEALTHCARE

The 2021 spring session was a very active one for healthcare issues, topped with attempts to make payment parity for telehealth services permanent, health insurance plan rate review, Medicaid public option plans, an immense pharmacy benefit manager regulation bill, and prior authorization restrictions.

Under the Governor’s COVID-related executive orders since March 2020, insurance companies have been required to cover all services offered by **telehealth** at the same payment level as in-person services and without cost-sharing. After lengthy negotiations, [HB 3308](#) passed both chambers with bipartisan support. A payment parity provision provides that the service can be billed as an in-person service in order to be subject to parity. The bill also allows for negotiation of alternative reimbursement rates. The Illinois Departments of Insurance and Public Health will commission a study on telehealth utilization; impact on access, outcomes and health equity; and costs to be presented in 2026 prior to the sunset in 2027. Coverage for telehealth services is mandatory for clinically appropriate and medically necessary telehealth services.

The Illinois State Medical Society introduced its omnibus **prior authorization** legislation again, capturing a long list of bill sponsors early coupled with an active social media campaign. House Majority Leader Greg Harris led the negotiations, ultimately resulting in mandating a 5-day turnaround for prior authorization decisions on non-urgent services and standards for when prior authorizations are not required. [HB 711](#) passed both houses.

Illinois became the first state to extend full **Medicaid postpartum coverage** for eligible women from 60 days after giving birth to 12 months. The federal CMS approved Illinois’ 1115 waiver allowing for the extension, which is aimed at improving health outcomes for new mothers and reducing the rate of maternal morbidity and mortality. Women with incomes up to 208% of the federal poverty level – approximately 2,500 women – will have continuous Medicaid eligibility through 12 months postpartum. [SB 967](#) (Castro/Greenwood) would also mandate insurance coverage of medically necessary treatment for **postpartum complications** up to one year after birth and mandates medically necessary treatment of mental conditions for pregnant or postpartum individuals up to one year.

The **Medicaid Working Group negotiated an omnibus bill** to contain several Medicaid-related bills into one. [SB 2294](#) (Gillespie-D) brings CHIP into Medicaid, adds chiropractic services to Medicaid coverage, adds smoking cessation medication to Medicaid coverage, adds PACE for long-term care, increases SLF rate by 10% for one year, increases dental rate by \$10 million, and extends Medicaid eligibility for those eligible during COVID.

OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST AWAITING THE GOVERNOR'S SIGNATURE

[Senate Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 11](#) (Villivalam/Evans) proposes amending the State Constitution prohibiting any **right to work** law. The referendum will appear on the November 8, 2022 ballot, asking voters to amend the Illinois Constitution to prohibit any right to work laws in Illinois.

[SB 539](#) (Gillespie/Burke) is an omnibus **ethics reform** bill that prohibits any legislator, constitutional officer, or elected county or municipal official from lobbying; prohibits fundraising events anywhere on a session day or day prior to session convening (not just in Sangamon County); and adds municipal lobbyists to the Lobbyist Registration Act. More information is available [HERE](#). The bill was not as strict as some Republicans (and maybe Democrats) wanted, but it passed with strong bipartisan support.

[SB 825](#) (Harmon/West) is a comprehensive **elections bill** that includes a new primary date for 2022 – June 28 – and voting rules that make it easier for people to permanently receive a mail-in ballot. The bill also would make curbside voting permanent and set up voting centers on Election Day where anyone within the election's jurisdiction could vote, regardless of the precinct of their residence. The measure also would make the general election date of Nov. 8, 2022, a state and school holiday, as it was last year, making it easier to use school buildings as polling places without having to deal with student security.

[HB 1443](#) (Ford/Lightford) would help re-start the Illinois **cannabis licensure system**, awarding 110 new cannabis distributor licenses through two successive lotteries that prioritize Black, Hispanic, and other minority communities in Illinois. Those would be in addition to the 75 licenses that have been held up due to legal suits filed regarding the award process for business licenses.

[SB 1965](#) (Lightford/Ford) would recognize **Juneteenth** as a state holiday and as a time to celebrate emancipation. June 19th will be a school holiday and a paid day off for all state employees.

[SB 2017](#) (Harmon/Harris) – the bill that implements the budget – enables Illinois to begin **vaccine lotteries** to encourage more residents to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Up to \$7 million in prizes will be awarded to adults through the program, which is being developed by the Illinois Lottery and the state Department of Public Health. The state might also offer up to \$3 million in “scholarships or educational awards” for people younger than 18.

[HB 3443](#) (Slaughter/Sims), containing “trailer bill” language for the Legislative Black Caucus's **criminal justice** legislation, cleared both chambers. The new policing law was a major plank of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus social justice platform. It included a ban on police chokeholds, a requirement that police wear body cameras by 2025 and expanded training on use of force and crisis intervention. It also allows for anonymous police misconduct complaints. The proposed changes would allow an officer to view his own body camera video before writing a police report, require that a felony violation of body camera requirements be proven to be intentional and an attempt to obstruct justice, revise the definition of chokeholds, and remove a ban on targeting someone's back with a Taser.

[HB 219](#) (Gillespie/Carroll), would ban school workers from locking children in **seclusion spaces**, limiting isolated timeouts and restraint. The legislation requires schools that receive state funding to make a plan to reduce — and eventually eliminate — the practices over the next three years. The element that

proved most contentious among lawmakers over the past 18 months is an immediate ban on schools' use of prone, or face-down, restraint for most students. Restraining a student that way would be permitted only for children whose special-education plans specifically allow it as an emergency measure.

[SB 654](#) (Peters/Ortiz) would require **30 minutes of recess** for K-5 students in all public schools, which some have dubbed the "right to play" bill, cleared the House by the smallest allowable vote total, 60-52, and passed the Senate along partisan lines.

[SB 58](#) (Munoz/Evans, Jr.) will finally **reduce trailer fees** from \$118 to \$36. This plan received bipartisan support, as many lawmakers said it was one of the top three issues when constituents call for help. SB 58 will also remove the cap on the **motor vehicle trade-in sales tax credit**. Before January 1, 2020, customers received a tax credit equal to the full value of any vehicle traded-in to a dealer. That changed in the funding plan for the 2019 capital bill, which provided that a customer who trades in a vehicle valued at over \$10,000 will not receive credit for the portion in excess of \$10,000.

[SB 2338](#) (Buckner/Harris, III) will enable **Illinois college athletes** to hire agents and sign endorsement deals. Passage of the legislation comes as the NCAA has signaled it would support allowing student-athletes to profit from their name, image and likeness, although the organization has yet to act in changing its long-standing bylaws that prohibit student athletes from receiving compensation in any form for playing sports.

[HB 3739](#) (Robinson, Jr./Bush) would require water utilities to **replace lead service lines**. Under the bill, water utilities would be required to submit an initial plan for lead service line replacement by April 15, 2024, with a final plan due to IEPA by April 15, 2027. The bill would also establish a state-run grant program to assist in minimizing the costs of lead line replacement. The state is prepared to receive federal funding to minimize the cost, which is estimated to near \$5 billion.

[HB 156](#) (B. Hernandez/Villa) would require **menstrual products** to be available during school hours in "bathrooms of every school building that are open for student use" from 4th through 12th grades.

[SB 2406](#) (Hoffman/Belt) would make **St. Clair County its own judicial circuit** and create the state's 24th judicial circuit, which would include Monroe, Randolph, Washington and Perry, and expand the subcircuits in the 19th Circuit, in Lake County, from six to 10.

[HB 2621](#) (Guzzardi/Hunter) is the COVID-19 **Affordable Housing Grant Program Act**, which passed with bipartisan support in both chambers. The bill creates a grant program for those seeking to build affordable housing in Illinois, especially those disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. It also extends the Illinois Affordable Housing Tax Credit.

[SB 672](#) (Hunter/Burke) expands the Illinois Freedom to Work Act to employees at salaries below \$75,000 and makes changes to **non-compete clauses**.

[HB 118](#) (Guzzardi/Villa) raises **employee recovery** amount from 2% to 5% for underpayments of wages.

[HB 684](#) (Gabel-D) **carves out ground ambulance services** from managed care. HFS estimates the bill will cost \$5-6 million annually.

[HB 706](#) (Morgan-D) makes changes to the **state employee group insurance** program.

[SB 1905](#) (Morrison-D) requires employers to notify employees of coverages not included in **policies written outside Illinois**.

[HB 3523](#) (Wheeler-R) expands IEMA definition of disaster to include **cyber attack**.

[SB 561](#) (Ellman-D) banned the sales of **PFAs** after January 1, 2025. An agreement would now ban certain uses of firefighting foam containing PFAS but allow manufacturers to continue using as part of fixed foam systems until an alternative is found. Food packaging bans were removed from the bill.

[SB 2563](#) (Bush-D) changes **diesel emission standards** for certain trucks and buses.

BILLS SIGNED INTO LAW

[SB 104](#) (Feigenholtz/Zalewski) extends the **cocktails-to-go** law prompted by the pandemic for three more years. Bars and restaurants would be able to give a free drink to people who've been vaccinated against the coronavirus.

[SB 72](#) (Hoffman/Harmon) passed the House as an alternative to the lame duck session bill, imposing a 9% **prejudgment interest** on injury awards beginning from notice of injury. SB 72 imposes a 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.

[HB 158](#) (Lilly-D), the Black Caucus' **healthcare pillar** bill, includes a moratorium on hospital closures and requires implicit bias training in medical schools and for continuing education. A Medicaid Technical Assistance Center would work with community-based providers with addressing social determinants of health for behavioral health issues.

STALLED LEGISLATION

Before adjourning, the House voted 96-11 on [SB 521](#) (Rita-D) to send to the Senate changes to the state's **gaming and sports betting** laws that would allow people to bet on Illinois collegiate teams, but not on an individual athlete's performance. The wagers would have to be done in person rather than on a mobile device. The in-state college betting provisions would sunset in two years. The measure also would allow the Wintrust Arena near McCormick Place, the home of the women's Chicago Sky pro basketball team, to open a sportsbook as is allowed at the city's larger sports venues. The measure does not change the provision that those seeking to create a mobile sports betting account must do so in person at a sportsbook or casino — a provision that had been lifted during the pandemic. SB 521 was not called for a Senate vote before lawmakers left Springfield.

The Senate, on June 1, passed a compromise bill — [HB 2908](#) — that would transition **Chicago to a fully elected board** in 2027. Under the compromise, the transition would begin in 2025 with a hybrid board,

where 11 members are appointed by the mayor and 10 are elected by voters. Starting in 2027, the city would get a fully elected board. The election to pick the remaining board members would take place in 2026. Mayor Lighfoot strongly opposes the bill. Advocates for a fully elected school board immediately are also deeply dissatisfied. The House, which overwhelmingly approved a different version, still must vote on this version of the bill before it goes to the Governor.

Labor has worked for several years on a measure like [HB 3437](#) (Walsh/Hastings) creating the Investing in Illinois Works Tax Credit to incentivize use of **labor contractors** and requiring that certain industries must pay prevailing wage on any work or maintenance. The bill remains in the Senate.

The Illinois House narrowly passed [HB 1091](#), otherwise known as the “**Fix the FOID Act**,” which would require gun owners to submit fingerprints when applying for or renewing a Firearm Owner Identification card. It would also require background checks for all gun transfers – including person-to-person sales. The bill passed with the minimum number of votes required in the House, 60-50, but was not called in the Senate. Instead, the Senate passed [HB 562](#), which is a more moderate version, enabling gunowners to apply for a FOID card that automatically renews, so long as they voluntarily submit their fingerprints. In addition, FOID cards and concealed carry licenses would be condensed into one document and Illinois State Police would establish a portal that includes reports of people whose FOID cards have been revoked or suspended. The House has not considered HB 562.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

June 18, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

The Illinois General Assembly adjourned this week **without passing an omnibus energy bill**, as was originally planned. Senate President Don Harmon says that an agreement is close. Lawmakers are expected to **return later this summer** to continue working toward passage.

In addition, both the House and Senate announced that they will return to Springfield for **Veto Session** the final two weeks of October:

- October 19-21
- October 26-28

BILLS PASSED ON FOID, BUDGET, ELECTED CHICAGO SCHOOL BOARD

Instead of an energy bill, the House accepted a bill already passed by the Senate – [House Bill 562](#) (Koehler/Hoffman) – that makes changes to **fix the Firearm Owner's Identification card system**. The bill aims to address the state's mounting backlog of FOID renewal applications and new applications while encouraging gun safety through increased fingerprinting and background checks. The bill requires all gun sales, including private sales, to include federal background checks; creates an electronic version of the FOID card that will be easier for the Illinois State Police to process; sets an incentive for firearm owners to submit fingerprints to gain access to automatic renewals; and creates of a law enforcement task force that will seek out firearms carried by individuals with revoked FOID cards. The House also voted to concur with Senate amendments on [HB 1092](#) (Gillespie/Stoneback), which would expand the pool of individuals who can ask a judge to apply a **firearm restraining order** upon someone who they fear may hurt themselves or others.

[House Resolution 391](#), approved with a vote of 66-45, allows **House remote participation for floor votes** under certain circumstances and for a limited period of time (from June 16 until the first day of the Fall Veto Session). The Senate adopted and has been using similar rules since January. This resolution was essential because the House Democrats needed a supermajority of 71 votes to accept Governor Pritzker's amendatory veto of [Senate Bill 2800](#) (**the Fiscal Year 2022 budget**), which mistakenly failed to include immediate effective dates upon first passage – meaning sections of the budget would not be approved for spending until July 1, 2022. Both the House and Senate subsequently accepted the Governor's amendatory veto.

In other business, both chambers also approved clerical changes to [HB 1738](#) (Hastings/Walsh), which re-enacts the **Small Wireless Facilities Deployment Act**. The legislation extending the sunset of telecommunication statutes ([Public Act 102-9](#)) inadvertently neglected to extend this Act. The House also voted to approve, among other legislation, [HB 2643](#) (Holmes/Hoffman), which provides amnesty for individuals who were **overpaid unemployment insurance** during the COVID-19 pandemic, and [HB 2908](#) (Martwick/Ramirez), which phases in a fully **elected school board** for Chicago Public Schools over successive elections in 2024 and 2026. Those bills will soon head to Gov. Pritzker's desk for final approval.

JUNETEENTH OFFICIALLY A STATE HOLIDAY

Gov. Pritzker has signed [HB 3922](#), which declares Juneteenth as a formal state holiday. Juneteenth has also been declared a federal holiday. To commemorate the abolition of slavery throughout the United States in 1865, Juneteenth will be recognized as National Freedom Day in Illinois. It will be a paid holiday for state workers and public education professionals when June 19 falls on a weekday.

REDISTRICTING LAWSUITS

Two lawsuits have been filed to block the use of a redistricting plan Democrats pushed through the General Assembly. House and Senate Republicans filed one last week, and the second suit was filed by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, or MALDEF, a group that represents Latin American communities. The suits are similar, alleging the use of American Community Survey population estimates, rather than actual census data, will produce districts of unequal size, in violation of the U.S. Constitution's 14th Amendment equal protection clause. In addition to requesting the new maps be found unconstitutional, the suits seek an injunction blocking election officials from certifying candidate petitions or conducting future elections using the new maps and for an order directing lawmakers to draw new maps using official census data in order to comply with the Constitution's "one person, one vote" requirement.

CONFIRMED APPOINTMENTS

The Senate has confirmed the following gubernatorial appointments to state departments, boards and commissions:

- INGER BURNETT-ZEIGLER: Commissioner of the Concealed Carry Licensing Review Board
- UMANG S. PATEL: Illinois State Medical Disciplinary Board
- SREENIVAS G. REDDY: Illinois State Medical Disciplinary Board
- THOMAS M. BENNETT: Guardianship and Advocacy Commission
- TIMOTHY E. DREA: Workers' Compensation Advisory Board
- MARC SMITH: Director of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
- IAN LINNABARY: State Board of Elections
- C. MCCROY ROSSMILLER: State Board of Elections
- RICK S. TERVEN SR.: State Board of Elections
- CASANDRA WATSON: State Board of Elections

DEPUTY GOVERNOR STEPPING DOWN

Dan Hynes, the Deputy Governor of Budget and Economy, is stepping down from his position in the administration following the approval of the FY22 budget this week. Former State Sen. **Andy Manar**, who joined the administration as a senior advisor in January, will take his place.

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

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ICCTA's Fall 2021 Veto Session Update

October 11, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

The Illinois General Assembly's fall 2021 Veto Session is scheduled for **October 19-21 and 26-28**. Even though lawmakers have already acted on bills vetoed and amendatorily vetoed by Gov. JB Pritzker, the House and Senate do need to approve a **Congressional district map** (see below for more information) and any other issue can be addressed during Veto Session. This year, however, a lighter load of legislation is expected, having just wrapped up the extended energy and climate negotiations. It is possible that some scheduled days could be canceled prior to or during the session.

That said, a few new bills have been filed in the last several weeks, including proposals responding to the recently passed Texas law that effectively bans most abortions in that state. So far, two Chicago lawmakers have filed bills inspired by the Texas law: one to expand [abortion access](#), and one that aims to rein in [gun violence](#). Both proposals could see discussion during the upcoming Veto Session.

State Reps. Michael Zalewski and Kam Buckner [filed a resolution](#) calling on lawmakers to reject any plan that would spend public money on a new stadium for the Chicago Bears. Sen. Robert Peters has said that he is drafting a similar piece of legislation.

Another possible issue includes amending the [Health Care Right of Conscience Act](#). The statute's language is so broadly written that, despite its original intent of shielding health care professionals from participating in treatments or procedures with which they were opposed as a matter of conscience (such as abortion and birth control), it is now being used to evade school vaccination/testing mandates. The Act now states that all persons have a right to refuse to obtain, receive or accept, or deliver, health care services and medical care, which includes testing. The Governor has called on the Democrat-controlled legislature to amend the Act to allow him to mandate vaccines and testing, but it is not yet known what any amendment would look like – whether the General Assembly would simply exempt vaccines or testing during a pandemic or if lawmakers would consider changing the whole law.

CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING

Democrats in the Illinois House and Senate relaunched an online redistricting portal ahead of public hearings to gather input on the makeup of new congressional districts. The tool allows individuals to draw and submit proposed congressional boundaries for state lawmakers to consider as they make plans for redistricting. The map-making portal can be accessed [here](#) and [here](#).

The Illinois House and Senate Redistricting Committees have also begun holding hearings to accept public testimony on new congressional and judicial subcircuit maps. **No proposed maps have yet been revealed**. The first hearing was last week, and another half dozen have been scheduled for the following seven days.

The parties to the lawsuit challenging the **state legislative maps** were in court last week. Discovery is ongoing but the upcoming calendar was also addressed. The Illinois State Board of Elections has been asked to file additional information this week about a **"drop dead date"** for having a new map in place to allow elections to proceed as planned. The next status hearing has been set for October 19. A trial date has not yet been set.

After the legal battles over the maps are concluded, we will begin to see politicians announce their future intentions -- such as state legislators seeking state-wide office, or someone from Congress running for Governor, for example. As a reminder, all state representatives and senators, all five state-wide elected constitutional offices, all congressional seats, and Senator Duckworth's seat will be on the ballot next year. **The Illinois primary election is scheduled for June 28.** Expect big money to flood the airwaves all next year (announced candidates for governor are already spending ad money).

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE DEFICIT

The state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund has a \$4.3 billion deficit. Interest payments are now accruing at 2.27% as the General Assembly lacks a plan to pay down the federal debt. In addition to the accruing interest, the state also has incentives to pay the debt built into law that increase employer tax payments and decrease claimant benefits beginning next year if the debt remains unpaid. Beginning in January 2022, the benefit period for unemployed persons claiming benefits shortens from 26 to 24 weeks, wage repayment drops from 47% to 42.4%, and employer tax rates increase 0.325%. The Illinois Retail Merchants Association estimates that these actions will add \$500 million in tax increases to employers and \$500 million in benefit cuts to claimants.

Lawmakers could pass legislation to push back the effective date of these cuts from January to later in 2022, but interest will continue to accrue on the \$4.3 billion deficit (and the deficit will likely continue to grow as high as \$5 billion next year). The state could also use some of the \$4-5 billion in unspent ARPA money from the federal government to pay down the Trust Fund deficit, but that decision would be part of next year's budget discussions.

COVID-19 UPDATE

President Biden visited Chicago last week and used his speech to push businesses to mandate COVID vaccines or weekly tests. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, 82% of Illinoisan adults have received at least one dose of the vaccine and 64.5% are fully vaccinated; 54% of all Illinoisans are fully vaccinated. The statewide positivity rate is declining at 2.1%. Gov. Pritzker has not announced the metrics he will use to determine when it is appropriate to roll back the indoor mask mandate.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

October 15, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

The Illinois General Assembly is scheduled to convene next week (October 19-21) and October 26-28. The Senate Assignments and House Rules Committees met this week to position legislation for consideration during the six-day Fall Veto Session. A number of potential issues have emerged for consideration. The General Assembly may act on electric vehicle manufacturing incentives, the unemployment insurance trust fund shortfall, clarification to the Health Care Right of Conscious Act, a gaming/sports betting bill, collaborative agreements for physician assistants, repeal of the Parental Notification of Abortion Act for minors, election code clean up, midwife certification, and new Congressional and judicial subcircuit maps. The rumor that session days could be cancelled isn't looking likely.

The Senate is implementing COVID protocols for the upcoming session. Those wishing to access Senate areas must undergo twice-a-week COVID testing. Advanced appointments are required to meet with Senators. The House is also making COVID testing available. The House has closed its viewing Gallery to the public, and only the media and special guests will be allowed access.

DRAFT CONGRESSIONAL MAP RELEASED

House and Senate Democrats released their proposed map of new congressional boundaries. The 17 proposed districts have equal populations of 753,677 residents. The map includes just one majority Hispanic district and three predominantly Black districts. Illinois Democrats are attempting to increase their congressional majority from 13-5 to 14-3, but some districts could end up being toss-ups, such as the 14th and the 6th districts.

The proposed map can be seen [HERE](#), and proposed demographic data can be found [HERE](#).

U.S. Rep. **Adam Kinzinger** (R-Channahon) has been drawn into the new 3rd District with Rep. **Marie Newman** (D-LaGrange) in a district that runs from Midway Airport west to Ottawa and LaSalle. Kinzinger has openly mulled a run for U.S. Senate in 2022 and indicated in a statement Friday a statewide race may be more likely. "Following the release of the new congressional maps for Illinois, my team and I will spend some time looking them over and reviewing all of the options, including those outside the House," he said.

Congressman **Darin LaHood** (R-Peoria) and Congresswoman **Mary Miller** (R-Oakland) have been drawn into a potential primary in the new 16th District, which runs from the southern edge of the Quad Cities to Quincy east to rural areas around Champaign and south to Miller's home north of Charleston. It is expected to be heavily Republican.

Congressman **Rodney Davis** (R-Taylorville) was drawn out of his current 13th District and into the new 15th District. The new district includes Vandalia and Effingham to the south, north to Danville and along the Indiana border and cuts to northwest Illinois, including Kewanee, Sterling, Dixon, and Freeport.

The map reduces rural areas of the 13th District and adds Democratic portions of St. Clair County, like Belleville and East St. Louis, to make the district more Democratic. The new 13th district includes nearly all of Springfield, the northern portion of Decatur, and all of Champaign-Urbana. Former Pritzker and Biden administration official **Nikki Budzinski** has announced to run for the seat.

The 17th District is an open seat being vacated by Congresswoman **Cheri Bustos**. The Democrats added more of Rockford and Peoria to the Quad Cities based district, and it also snakes to include central portions of Bloomington and Normal to make it a stronger district for Democrats.

Currently, two additional redistricting hearings will be held next week in order to hear additional feedback from the public. The House Redistricting Committee will meet Wednesday, October 20, at 9 a.m. in room 114 of the Illinois State Capitol building, and the Senate Redistricting Committee will meet on the same day at 2 p.m. in room 212 of the Illinois State Capitol building.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

October 29, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

The Fall 2021 Veto Session has wrapped up, and the Illinois General Assembly is looking at a shorter session for spring 2022. The House of Representatives calendar ([HERE](#)) and the Senate calendar ([HERE](#)) have been released; both chambers are scheduled to return for session **January 4 – April 8, 2022**. While this might seem like an abbreviated session, lawmakers have managed to pack in just as many scheduled session days, if not more, than if a regular May 31 adjournment had been set. The 2022 session will be a long sprint so legislators can get back to their home districts to campaign ahead of the June 28 primary.

IMPORTANT DATES

- January 4: Second Half of the 102nd General Assembly Convenes
- January 7: Senate Legislative Reference Bureau Deadline
- January 14: House Legislative Reference Bureau Deadline
- January 21: Senate Bill Introduction Deadline
- January 28: House Bill Introduction Deadline
- February 2: Governor's Joint State of the State and Budget Address
- February 10: Senate Committee Deadline
- February 18: House Committee Deadline
- February 25: Senate 3rd Reading Deadline
- March 4: House 3rd Reading Deadline

LEGISLATION SWITCHES CHAMBERS

- March 25: House and Senate Committee Deadline
- April 1: House and Senate 3rd Reading Deadline
- April 8: Adjournment

CONGRESSIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE MAPS

On Thursday evening, House and Senate Democrats released a fourth draft of a redistricted **congressional map**. The map can be found [HERE](#); the associated demographic data can be found [HERE](#). Congressional redistricting text was filed as [Senate Amendment 1](#) to House Bill 1291. The Senate approved the fourth version of the map by a 41-18 vote, followed by the House with a vote of 71-43.

In this version, a new opportunity district was created for Latino representation. US Reps. **Chuy Garcia** and **Marie Newman** were drawn into the 4th District together. Newman, however, has since announced a re-election campaign challenging **Sean Casten** in the 6th District. **Mary Miller** and **Mike Bost** are still together in the 12th District. Bost has already announced his reelection bid. **Adam Kinzinger** and **Darin LaHood** are mapped together in the 16th District. The morning after the map was approved by the legislature, however, Kinzinger announced that he will NOT seek re-election, while LaHood announced that he will run again.

The only other GOP incumbent, **Rodney Davis**, was drawn into a safe GOP district (the 15th District), likely to dissuade him from running for Governor. That is, unless any of his colleagues also want to run there as Miller's home is just a mile outside of Davis' district. Democrats crafted the map to win 14 of the 17 congressional seats in the state.

A **redistricting lawsuit** filed earlier this month (which alleged that the latest Democratic-passed legislative redistricting plan "cracked" Black East St. Louis residents from a majority Black district to help shore up a neighboring white district) has been lumped in with two existing suits over legislative maps. That case will likely reach a decision by the end of the year.

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LEGISLATION PASSED BY BOTH CHAMBERS THIS WEEK

PAID COVID LEAVE FOR EDUCATORS

Gov. Pritzker is threatening to veto a proposal that would allow educators to be able to isolate for COVID-19 without having to use their sick days. [House Bill 2778](#) will require all school districts, community colleges, and public universities to allow their employees ample paid leave to abide by "public health guidance, mandates and requirements issued by the Department of Public Health." The amendments would also apply if an educator has a child who must isolate after virus exposure.

HEALTH CARE RIGHT OF CONSCIENCE ACT AMENDMENT

The Illinois House voted 64-52 and the Senate voted 31-24 to pass [Senate Bill 1169](#), which amends the Health Care Right of Conscience Act to shield employers from civil suits if they enforce COVID vaccine testing mandates. House Sponsor Robyn Gabel (D-Evanston) said that the bill would correct the misuse of a state law that was established decades ago primarily to prevent health care providers from being forced to provide abortions. Currently, the law allows individuals to object to receiving or participating in health care services on moral or religious grounds. If Gov. JB Pritzker signs the bill, which is expected, the law will specifically exempt treatments such as vaccines that prevent the contraction or transmission of COVID-19. In other words, individuals could no longer legally use a moral or religious argument to skirt a COVID-19 vaccine or testing requirement.

REPEAL OF THE PARENTAL NOTICE OF ABORTION ACT OF 1995

Senators voted 32-22 and the House voted 62-51 to pass [House Bill 370](#), which would repeal the state law that requires doctors and other health care providers to notify the parents of a minor seeking an abortion. In addition to the repeal, the legislation creates the Youth Health and Safety Act, which "seeks to restate Illinois' commitment to full and equitable access to reproductive health care for all persons across the State, without barriers based on race or ethnicity, immigration status, age, geographic location, economic means, education level, or other categories of identity. The Act confirms that Illinois will not move backwards and will continue to assure that reproductive rights are protected and recognized." It also creates a new Youth Health and Safety Advisory Working Group to identify and review laws that impact pregnant youth, parenting youth, and those that may become pregnant or a parent. The Governor has indicated he will sign the bill.

REIMAGINING ELECTRIC VEHICLES IN ILLINOIS ACT – THE REV ACT

[House Bill 1769](#), a package of tax credits and incentives meant to encourage the development of the electric vehicle industry in Illinois, passed the Senate 55-0 and later passed the House 110-2-1. The Governor is expected to sign the bill. Businesses involved in the electric vehicle industry, from automakers to parts and battery manufacturers, would be eligible for income tax credits based on the amount of new jobs they create and construction credits for building facilities.

GAMING

[House Bill 3136](#), which passed the state Senate 44-12 and the House 100-11, would allow for some betting on in-state college sports teams. Bets will be permitted on the final outcome of games -- but not individual performance -- and would have to be placed in person at a casino. The bill would also prevent additional municipalities from enacting a “push tax,” which is placed on each bet made at video gaming terminals. However, the handful of cities that have already enacted the tax will be grandfathered in, allowing them to continue collecting the tax, which has been subject to several lawsuits. The bill also caps an annual fee that non-home rule municipalities can charge on video gaming terminals at \$250, up from \$25. Additionally, Illinois residents would be able to sign up for sports betting accounts from their phones or computers beginning March 5, 2022, instead of doing so in person at a casino as required under the 2019 law.

MIDWIFE LICENSURE

[House Bill 3401](#) will create the Licensed Certified Professional Midwife Practice Act to set standards for the qualifications, education, training, and experience of people who seek to be licensed as certified professional midwives. Currently, 25 states recognize certified professional midwives as health care professionals who can supervise home births. Illinois does not currently recognize CPMs, as the occupation does not require a nursing degree. Instead, the state only recognizes certified nurse midwives who are advanced-practice registered nurses. Advocates of this legislation have been trying to license the profession for 43 years.

ELECTION OMNIBUS LEGISLATION

[Senate Bill 536](#) was passed to clean up some provisions and include other items after the General Assembly passed a much larger election bill in the spring. The bill creates a task force to explore access to voting for persons with disabilities, enables voters to select a non-binary option when designating the applicant’s sex of the voter registration form, makes changes concerning 2022 general primary election and general election dates and signature requirements, increases election precinct sizes, establishes that at least one voting booth at a polling place accessible to voters with disabilities is wheelchair accessible, clarifies ballots at drop boxes must be collected on days prior to election day but not at a specific time, and many other changes. Additionally, the bill would bar direct contributions to judicial campaigns from dark money groups and out-of-state sources.

ENERGY PACKAGE BILL

[House Bill 3666](#) was billed as a “technical clean-up.” The bill requires any grant or rebate applicants for installation of an electric vehicle charging station must comply with the requirements of the Prevailing Wage Act; contractors and subcontractors on High Impact Business construction jobs must file diversity reports; wind energy and solar energy supplies must submit an annual report on procurement goals and

minority spending; the incremental change to specified charges are not applicable to utilities serving less than 100,000 customers (not 25,000 customers); the start date for the assessment of a monthly Energy Assistance Charge is fixed; construction of a new utility scale solar power facility by a High Impact Business, electric vehicle charging station projects financed under the Act, and renewable energy projects are required to pay prevailing wage as “public works;” and other changes.

CHICAGO SCHOOL BOARD

House and Senate lawmakers approved a measure that tweaks the law passed earlier this year for a fully elected Chicago school board by 2027. The bill would remove a requirement that Chicago’s mayor receive City Council approval for appointments of 10 board members and the board president when a partially elected, partially appointed board takes effect after the November 2024 election. The measure also specifies that the board positions will be unpaid.

TRANSPORTATION OMNIBUS BILL

[House Bill 106](#) contains cleanup language for the Secretary of State’s office and some fare percentage relief for the Chicago Regional Transit Authority. The bill also allows airline employees to use already-earned sick time to care for sick family members.

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COVID

The seven-day statewide positivity for cases as a percent of total test is 1.8%. Of Illinois’ total population, 69% have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, and 54% of Illinois’ total population is fully vaccinated.

PROVIDERS PREPARING FOR VACCINATIONS FOR CHILDREN AGES 5 TO 11

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued emergency use authorization for Pfizer’s COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 5-11. Illinois is expected to receive an initial allotment of 306,000 doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, as well as 73,000 specifically for the city of Chicago and over 100,000 for pharmacy partners. Overall, the state expects to receive about 500,000 doses next week; there are about 1.1 million children between ages 5-11 in Illinois. More than 2,200 locations have volunteered to administer the shots, including more than 700 pharmacies, 700 pediatric and family medicine practices, and 200 hospitals. IDPH is also overseeing outreach to 756 elementary school districts across the state to offer parent-approved vaccination clinics on school grounds.

ANOTHER UNION VACCINE AGREEMENT

The state of Illinois has entered into the largest union agreement yet regarding vaccines for 7,800 state employees represented by AFSCME within the departments of Human Services and Veterans’ Affairs. Nearly 10,000 state workers are now covered under union vaccine agreements. In addition to the announced agreements, the state and AFSCME have reached an impasse at the bargaining table for employees at the Departments of Corrections and Juvenile Justice. The next steps for those bargaining units are as follows:

- For roughly 10,300 security employees at the Departments of Corrections and Juvenile Justice, the state and the union will submit to interest arbitration.

- For an additional 1,900 non-security employees at those two departments, the state has informed AFSCME that it will implement the following terms: employees must get their first shot by October 26 and their second shot by November 30. This is in accordance with state law.

GOVERNOR AND TOP STAFF TO ATTEND UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE IN GLASGOW

The Governor and top staff will arrive in London, England on November 2 and spend two days meeting with business leaders to discuss economic development opportunities and prospects for investment within the state's burgeoning green economy. On November 5, the Illinois delegation will attend the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland. According to a press release from the Governor's office, the Governor will share how Illinois is becoming the leading state in the Midwest on climate action and clean energy.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

November 15, 2021

By Jessica Nardulli, ICCTA Legislative Counsel

ICCTA ADOPTS 2022 LEGISLATIVE GOALS

At its November 13 meeting, the Illinois Community College Trustees Association's Board of Representatives adopted ICCTA's [state legislative goals for 2022](#):

- Local control of community colleges
- Community college baccalaureate degrees
- Equitable funding for community college operations
- Equity in higher education
- Equity in MAP funding
- Funding for capital construction projects

MARTIN TORRES APPOINTED DEPUTY GOVERNOR FOR EDUCATION

Governor JB Pritzker has promoted **Martin Torres** from assistant deputy governor to **Deputy Governor for Education** following Jesse Ruiz's resignation. Torres worked on Gov. Pritzker's first gubernatorial campaign and then served as a senior policy advisor. Previously, he served as associate director of the Latino Policy Forum.

GRF SURPLUS / GOMB PROJECTS IMPROVED OUTLOOK FOR NEXT 5 FISCAL YEARS

The Governor's office expects a year-end surplus of \$418 million in the state's General Revenue Fund due to higher than expected income and sales tax revenues through the first part of the new fiscal year. However, the state is still projected to run deficits between \$400 million to \$1 billion in the 2025 budget year. Gov. Pritzker proposes using the additional revenues to reduce the unpaid bill backlog and put \$300 million in the state's rainy day fund. The state pension systems have unfunded liabilities totaling \$141 billion, consuming a significant portion of the state budget.

In its annual economic and fiscal policy report, the Governor's Office of Management and Budget forecasts a \$406 million shortfall in the state's general funds for Fiscal Year 2023 (which begins next July 1), down from the \$2.9 billion estimate provided in 2019. The budget gap in the state's general funds for fiscal year 2024 (which begins July 1, 2023) is now projected to be \$820 million, a much lower figure than the \$3.2 billion projected in 2019.

The combined shortfall for those two fiscal years is now expected to be about \$1.2 billion, rather than the earlier forecast of \$6.1 billion — or about \$4.9 billion less. For the following three fiscal years, the report shows deficits of a little over \$1 billion for the 2025 fiscal year, \$903 million for 2026 and \$598 million for 2027.

HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING COMMISSION

The [Commission on Equitable Public University Funding](#) held its first meeting this week to discuss how Illinois public universities are currently funded and explore ideas to ensure that all students can achieve their postsecondary goals. The group, comprised of 33 members, will align with the state's new higher education strategic plan, [A Thriving Illinois: Higher Education Paths to Equity, Sustainability, and Growth](#),

which outlines the need to invest in higher education in a way that is equitable, stable, and sufficient. The commission will recommend data-driven, equity-centered criteria and approaches for a funding model to distribute state resources to public universities. A report is due to the Illinois General Assembly by July 1, 2023. Members include legislators from each caucus, representatives from each public university, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission, and members of educational advocacy groups.

COMMON APP AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS TO APPLY TO ALL ILLINOIS PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

First-year students applying to college will now be able to apply to any of Illinois' 12 public universities, plus dozens of the state's private institutions, with only one form. Three public universities (the University of Illinois at Chicago, Northern Illinois University, and Chicago State University) were previously available on the Common App. A \$1 million state investment enabled the remaining public universities to join the program. The last outstanding university, Northeastern Illinois University, will be implemented this fall.

FEDERAL INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS COMING TO ILLINOIS

The \$1.2 trillion federal infrastructure bill will send **\$17 billion** to Illinois for projects, with the prospects of billions more from competitive grants. Several legislators are already supporting a projected \$2.7 billion rebuild of the Eisenhower Expressway in Chicago.

According to a White House analysis, the Illinois impact over five years is:

- **\$1.7 billion** to improve drinking and wastewater infrastructure throughout Illinois.
- **\$9.8 billion** for federal highway projects.
- **\$1.4 billion** for bridge replacement and repairs (and the state could receive more if successful in competitive grants).
- **About \$4 billion** to improve public transportation options across the state.
- **At least \$100 million** for broadband coverage across the state. At present, there are about 228,000 Illinoisans who currently do not have broadband. About 2.9 million low-income Illinoisans would receive an internet access benefit.
- **Approximately \$616 million** for airport improvements. Under a new Airport Terminal Improvement program, a \$5 billion funding pool will be in place through September 30, 2030, for the Secretary of Transportation to provide competitive grants for "projects that address the aging infrastructure of the nation's airports."
- **\$149 million** to fund the expansion of the electric charging network in Illinois. Plus, Illinois interests could compete for EV charging grants from a \$2.5 billion pool.
- **\$27 million** to protect against wildfires.
- **\$22 million** to protect against cyberattacks.

2022 CAMPAIGN UPDATES

U.S. Rep. **Rodney Davis** (R) will run for re-election to Congress rather than face Gov. Pritzker in a gubernatorial campaign next November. Billionaire **Ken Griffin** says that he will back a Republican challenger to Gov. Pritzker, although he did not say who he will support. The Governor spent \$171 million of his own money in 2018 against then-incumbent Bruce Rauner. Griffin gave Rauner \$22.5 million in 2018 and spent another \$54 million to defeat the graduated income tax referendum in 2020.

State Rep. **Dan Brady** (R-Bloomington) plans to run for Secretary of State. The Democrat frontrunner is former State Treasurer and Illinois Community College Board chair **Alexi Giannoulas**.

State Rep. **Mark Batinick** (R-Plainfield) has announced his retirement from the General Assembly. He plans to complete his term but will not run for re-election in 2022. His retirement means that House Republicans will lose their floor leader.

State Rep. **John D'Amico** (D-Chicago) resigned from the General Assembly last week. D'Amico, who chaired the House Transportation Vehicles and Safety Committee, is now the political director for the Local 130 Plumber's Union. Sen. **Ram Villivalam**, who also serves as 39th Ward Precinct Committeeman, has the most weighted vote at 45 percent to appoint D'Amico's replacement.

State Rep. **Mike Murphy** (R-Springfield) will resign from the state legislature on December 1 to serve as president and chief executive officer of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce. His departure avoids a primary contest against State Rep. **Avery Bourne**, (R-Morrisonville) in the newly drawn 108th House District.

Former State Representative and Illinois Department of Natural Resources director **Wayne Rosenthal** (R) plans to run against incumbent Sen. **Steve McClure** in the new 54th Senate District. Rosenthal currently serves on the Lincoln Land Community College board.

Chicago Ald. **Gilbert Villegas** (D) launched the first bid for the newly created heavily Hispanic 3rd Congressional District. Others considering a run include State Sen. **Omar Aquino** and State Rep. Delia Ramirez.

Former Rockford State Representative **Litesa Wallace** (D) launched her campaign for Congress in Illinois' new 17th Congressional District. Former Rockford and Quad Cities TV meteorologist **Eric Sorensen** also announced his run. State Sen. **Steve Stadelman** is still considering a run for this seat. **Esther Joy King** (R), who narrowly lost to incumbent Cheri Bustos in 2020, has already raised considerable funds for her 2022 campaign.

Aaron R. Smith (R), vice chair of the John A. Logan College board, has announced his candidacy for the new 118th House District.

REDISTRICTING LAWSUIT

Rep. **Angelica Guerrero-Cuellar** (D) filed an unusual motion in federal court to intervene as a separate *defendant* in a pair of lawsuits challenging the legislative redistricting plan that was signed into law in September. Guerrero-Cuellar, who represents the largely Latino 22nd District on Chicago's southwest side, is arguing the composition of her district, and therefore her chances of election, could hang in the balance if the court decides to alter the map.

The Illinois Republican Party, NAACP, and MALDEF have submitted proposed alternative legislative maps to a panel of federal judges. A three-judge federal court panel set the **week of December 6** as the time it will hear the consolidated cases challenging the new state legislative district maps. The case is being put

on an expedited schedule in order to accommodate the 2022 election cycle. Under the current schedule, candidates can begin circulating nominating petitions on January 13, 2022, and those petitions must be submitted to the State Board of Elections the week of March 7-14.

COVID UPDATE

Illinois COVID cases are up 29 percent over last week. The numbers have been moving in the wrong direction for about two weeks as people spend more time indoors due to colder weather. The seven-day statewide case positivity rate is 2.5 percent. Of Illinois' total population, a little more than 67 percent have received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, and 61 percent of Illinois' total population is fully vaccinated.

CHILDREN AGES 5-11 NOW ABLE TO RECEIVE COVID-19 VACCINE

The Illinois Department of Public Health has adopted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation for children ages 5 to 11 receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. IDPH reports that 2,200 providers throughout the state are already enrolled and available to vaccinate children. IDPH staff are also available to assist with school-based vaccination drives around the state. There is no requirement for children to receive a vaccine to attend school. Gov. Pritzker has said that such a requirement would require legislative action.

ACA MARKETPLACE OPEN ENROLLMENT

Open Enrollment for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Health Insurance Marketplace runs from November 1, 2021 through January 15, 2022, allowing Illinoisans an additional month to enroll. There are 11 carriers for plan year 2022, up from eight in plan year 2021, and five in plan year 2020. The three new health insurance carriers include: Molina Healthcare of Illinois, Inc.; Oscar Health Plan; and UnitedHealthcare of Illinois, Inc. More than 291,000 Illinoisans enrolled in ACA Marketplace health insurance plans during open enrollment last year, and 54,432 more purchased plans during the Special Enrollment Period in response to COVID-19.

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