



ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report January 17, 2023

It was an eventful week in Springfield.

The lame duck legislative session ended late Tuesday, January 10, with the passage of high-profile legislation. Illinois Democrats are claiming victories on gun control and reproductive rights. They also passed a supplemental appropriation bill for the current fiscal year, paid leave for private employees, an economic development package (including a deal closure fund for the Governor), clean energy changes, an omnibus healthcare package, and other measures.

LAME DUCK LEGISLATION

Governor JB Pritzker has signed the **Protect Illinois Communities Act**, banning the sale and distribution of assault weapons, high-capacity magazines, and switches in Illinois, effective immediately. [House Bill 5471](#) also caps sales of high-capacity ammunition magazines, bans “switches” that convert legal handguns into assault weapons and extends the ability of courts to prevent dangerous individuals from possessing a gun through firearm restraining orders. The new law also requires existing owners of semi-automatic rifles to register their ownership.

Gov. Pritzker also signed a plan designed to **safeguard Illinois abortion providers and patients** from legal attacks from GOP-controlled states with abortion bans that seek to block patients from coming here for the procedure. Illinois’ plan also requires health insurers to cover abortion-inducing medication, HIV-prevention drugs, and hormone-therapy medicines used by people transitioning from one gender to another. The Governor has pledged to sign the legislation.

Also, in the waning hours of the 102nd General Assembly, both chambers passed an initiative granting workers five days of **paid leave** per year. The final bill was a compromise that had the backing of key labor and business groups. The measure would take effect January 1, 2024.

Earlier in the week, before the constitutional officers took the oath of office, Gov. Pritzker signed [Senate Bill 1720](#), the second **FY 2023 Budget Implementation Act (BIMP)**. The bill includes **pay raises** for legislators to \$85,000 per year annually, up from just over \$73,345 – a nearly 16% increase to their base salary, as well as increases for constitutional officers and state agency heads. The bill also allows for a \$400 million **business incentive fund** sought by the governor, which is intended to help keep the state competitive in its attempts to draw in more economic development. Other provisions include:

- Establishes Hospital Pandemic Recovery Stabilization Payments and directs the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services to disburse \$460 million in emergency stabilization payments for hospitals due to increased staffing and operational costs;
- Authorizes grants, subject to appropriation, to units of local government and public institutions of higher education to hire and retain law enforcement officers;

- Requires the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to seek federal reimbursements for administrative costs associated with the provision of independent legal representation to foster children and their parents;
- Requires the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to create a program to award grants to local chambers of commerce;
- Provides for General Revenue Fund transfers to the Budget Stabilization Fund (\$850 million) and the Disaster Response and Recovery Fund (\$72 million). Increases the cap on the Budget Stabilization Fund from 5% to 7.5% of total general funds estimated for the fiscal year; and
- Eliminates the provision that limits the salaries of agency directors at 85% of the Governor's annual salary.

Lawmakers also approved an **FY23 supplemental appropriation bill**, HB 969. As amended, [HB 969](#) appropriates \$530 million GRF, \$3.6 billion other state funds, and \$78.8 million in federal funds. Some of the highlights include:

- \$10 million GRF to the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulations for the implementation and administration of a new licensing system for licensed professionals;
- \$43 million in COVID relief funding to independent safety-net hospitals;
- \$850 million GRF for the state's Rainy-Day Fund;
- \$500 million to DCEO from the Large Business Attraction Fund for the Invest in Illinois Program (\$400 million was transferred in the FY23 BIMP);
- \$162 million GRF to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and the Illinois Department of Human Services for costs associated with asylum seekers and \$20 million to the City of Chicago;
- \$12.5 million for developmentally disabled for frontline workers;
- \$25 million GRF for state-operated facilities at DHS;
- \$100 million GRF to the Illinois Department of Information Technology for the Technology Management Revolving Fund;
- \$40 million in CURES/COVID funding to DHS for grants and loans to support permanent supportive housing and emergency shelter;
- \$20 million in CURES/COVID funding to DHS for grants, loans, and expenses associated with the Opening Doors Program;
- Makes several smaller appropriations for supportive housing, housing for homeless persons and homeless youth, and emergency shelters; and
- \$3.12 billion (\$196 million in GRF) for healthcare and MCO costs intended to maximize federal Medicaid match.

[SB 1836](#) corrects an unintended consequence of the **nurse staffing agency** legislation, [HB 4666](#) (PA 102-946). Under the new law, international nurse staffing agencies are no longer able to assign foreign nurses to hospitals in Illinois. SB 1836 makes changes to allow foreign-born nurses, working in cooperation with their international staffing agencies, to once again practice in Illinois hospitals. SB 1836 passed both houses and now heads to the Governor's desk.

[HB 4412](#) makes several **clean energy changes** including: (1) reforming citing requirements for wind and solar; (2) creating a mechanism for financial relief for electrical rate payers in the MISO region (subject to appropriation); (3) cleans up Climate Works HUB language; and (4) makes changes to the hiring of the Director of the Illinois Power Authority. HB 4412 also heads to the Governor's desk.

[SB 2951](#) was approved by both chambers and contains various **economic development** legislation: (1) creates the Invest in Illinois Act, which includes specifications for the Governor's \$1 billion "closing fund" that will be used to attract large employers; (2) makes renewable energy manufacturers eligible for credits under the Reimagining Electric Vehicles Act and provides that agreements under the Act may be renewed for an additional 15-year period; (3) exempts businesses certified under the REV Act or the MICRO Act from the Telecommunications Infrastructure Maintenance Fee and the Simplified Municipal Telecommunications Tax Act; (4) creates a \$1.50/gallon Sustainable Aviation Fuel purchase credit; and (5) prohibits state economic incentives if the Chicago Bears move their stadium to Arlington Heights.

MORE RETIREMENTS / NEW MEMBERS

Illinois House Republican Leader **Jim Durkin** announced his retirement from the General Assembly just before the convening of the 103rd General Assembly. Shortly after the November 8 election, Durkin announced that he would not seek another term as House GOP leader, and his decision to resign his seat had been expected. Durkin's successor representing the 82nd House district will be selected by local Republican township officials, and that suburban Cook County district is expected to be a "Tier One" race in 2024.

State Sen **Patricia Van Pelt**, a Democrat from Chicago's West Side, will step down from the state Senate at the end of the month.

Tom Bennett, an Illinois House Republican, has been chosen for the Senate seat vacated by **Jason Barickman**. A former Parkland trustee and ICCTA president, Bennett is the uncle of the late Sen. **Scott Bennett**, who died last month. Bennett's appointment to the Senate opens up the 106th House District seat. Local party leaders have one month to select his replacement.

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY BEGINS

Gov. Pritzker was sworn in to his second term on Monday, January 9, laying out proposals for free college, preschool, and childcare as his top priorities. Pritzker also proposed permanent tax relief (but did not lay out any details) and plans to enshrine abortion rights in the Illinois constitution. He will present a budget to the General Assembly next month that may provide more specifics.

On Wednesday, January 11, the new 103rd General Assembly was formally inaugurated with a record 78 Democrats in the House, compared with 40 Republicans, while a 40-19 Democratic majority was sworn into the Senate. In the Senate, **16 new senators** were sworn-in, and **24 new representatives** took the oath of office – with two House vacancies yet to be filled. Several veteran lawmakers in both parties departed due to resignation or election losses.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP TEAMS ANNOUNCED

House Speaker Chris Welch released his full **House Democrat** leadership team:

- Rep. **Robyn Gabel** – Majority Leader
- Rep. **Jehan Gordon-Booth** – Speaker Pro Tempore / Chief Budgeteer
- Rep. **Mary E. Flowers** – Deputy Majority Leader / Dean of the Caucus
- Rep. **Elizabeth Hernandez** – Deputy Majority Leader
- Rep. **Jay Hoffman** – Assistant Majority Leader
- Rep. **Natalie Manley** – Assistant Majority Leader

- Rep. **Kam Buckner** – Assistant Majority Leader
- Rep. **Aaron Ortiz** – Assistant Majority Leader
- Rep. **Barbara Hernandez** – Assistant Majority Leader
- Rep. **Marcus Evans** – Assistant Majority Leader
- Rep. **Bob Rita** – Assistant Majority Leader
- Rep. **Kelly Burke** – Assistant Majority Leader
- Rep. **Theresa Mah** – Majority Conference Chair
- Rep. **Nick Smith** – Majority Officer / Sergeant at Arms

Welch also released the following list of caucus whips:

- Rep. **Lakesia Collins** – Black Caucus Whip
- Rep. **Edgar Gonzalez** – Latinx Caucus Whip
- Rep. **Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz** – Asian American Caucus Whip
- Rep. **Frances Ann Hurley** – Mod Caucus Whip
- Rep. **Lawrence Walsh Jr.** – Downstate Caucus Whip
- Rep. **Will Guzzardi** – Progressive Caucus Whip
- Rep. **Anne Stava-Murray** – Women’s Caucus Whip
- Rep. **Nabeela Syed** – Freshman Caucus Whip
- Rep. **Maurice West** – Assistant Floor Whip
- Rep. **Ann Williams** – Assistant Floor Whip
- Rep. **Katie Stuart** – Assistant Floor Whip
- Rep. **Bob Morgan** – Assistant Floor Whip

Speaker Welch also announced chairs for three committees. These committees will be chaired by Assistant Majority Leaders, who will serve in their leadership capacities on an uncompensated basis:

- Executive Committee – Leader **Bob Rita**
- Labor & Commerce Committee – Leader **Marcus Evans, Jr.**
- Revenue & Finance Committee – Leader **Kelly Burke**

Over the next several days, the Speaker will be reaching out to eligible committee chairs (members who are in at least their third term) to continue discussions about priorities and preferences for committee assignments.

Newly elected **House Republican** Leader Tony McCombie has also announced her leadership team:

- Rep. **Norine Hammond** - Deputy Leader
- Rep. **Ryan Spain** - Deputy Leader
- Rep. **Jeff Keicher** - Conference Chair
- Rep. **C.D. Davidsmeyer** - Assistant Republican Leader
- Rep. **John Cabello** - Assistant Republican Leader
- Rep. **Bradley Stephens** - Assistant Republican Leader
- Rep. **Charles Meier** - Assistant Republican Leader
- Rep. **Jackie Haas** - Assistant Republican Leader
- Rep. **Michael Marron** - Assistant Republican Leader
- Rep. **Patrick Windhorst** - Republican Floor Leader

Members of newly elected **Senate Republican** Leader John Curran’s leadership team include:

- Senator **Sue Rezin** – Deputy Leader

- Senator **Neil Anderson** – Caucus Chair
- Senator **Terri Bryant** – Assistant Republican Leader
- Senator **Dale Fowler** – Assistant Republican Leader
- Senator **Steve McClure** – Assistant Republican Leader
- Senator **Jason Plummer** – Assistant Republican Leader
- Senator **Sally Turner** – Republican Caucus Whip
- Senator **Jil Tracy** – Republican Caucus Whip

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- January 27: Deadline – Senate Legislative Reference Bureau requests
- February 3: Deadline – House LRB requests
- February 10: Deadline – Introduction of Senate bills in the Senate
- February 15: Governor’s State of the State / Budget Address
- February 17: Deadline – Introduction of House Bills in the House
- February 28: Consolidated primary election
- March 10: Deadline – Senate bills out of Senate committee / House bills out of House committee
- March 24: Deadline – Third Reading of House bills in the House
- March 31: Deadline – Third Reading of Senate bills in the Senate
- April 4: Consolidated Election (including community college trustee elections)
- April 28: Deadline – House bills out of Senate committee / Senate bills out of House committee
- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

PARKLAND TRUSTEE APPOINTED TO ICCB

Gov. Pritzker has appointed Parkland College trustee **Dr. Maureen Banks** to serve on the Illinois Community College Board, filling the unexpired term of **James Ayers** (also a Parkland trustee). Banks was elected to the Parkland board in April 2021 and currently serves as co-chair of ICCTA’s Future of Work Special Committee. After a 33-year career at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, she retired in 2022 as Director of Safety and Compliance. Banks also serves on the Quincy University Board of Trustees, the Champaign Rotary Board, and the Carle Illinois College of Medicine Institutional Review Board. She received a Bachelor of Sciences from Western Illinois University, a Master of Sciences from the University of Iowa, and completed her PhD in human resources education at the University of Illinois.

ISBE PROVIDES FUTURE EDUCATORS GRANTS

The Illinois State Board of Education is providing more than 10,000 grants to students who aspire to be future educators to allow them to get a head-start on teacher preparation while helping schools address statewide shortages. There are currently 10,805 students involved in the Education Career Pathway Program, which ISBE says contributed to a 41% increase in enrollment in teacher training programs from 2017 to 2021. Schools are still reporting 2,139 unfilled teacher positions as of 2021.

IBHE AWARDS NURSING SCHOOL GRANTS, NURSE EDUCATOR FELLOWSHIPS

The Illinois Board of Higher Education has awarded 11 nursing school grants, totaling \$750,000, and 40 nurse educator fellowships, totaling \$400,000, for FY23. That is an increase of seven more grants and 20 more fellowships than in FY 2022. The grants are awarded to colleges and universities to help increase the number of registered nurses with high-quality credentials in the state. The fellowships help retain qualified nursing educators at those higher education institutions. Each fellowship amounts to \$10,000 in salary supplements for faculty. The grants vary in size, with the largest amount awarded being \$100,000.

TRIAL DATE SET IN MADIGAN RACKETEERING CASE

A federal judge has set a trial date of April 1, 2024, for former Illinois House Speaker **Michael Madigan** and longtime confidant **Michael McClain** on racketeering charges alleging that they conspired to leverage Madigan's elected office and political power for personal gain.

SECRETARY OF STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER

New Illinois Secretary of State **Alexi Giannoulias** signed a wide-ranging Executive Ethics Order shortly after taking office on January 9. The order upgrades and improves transparency, codifies key procedures in the office's internal policy manual, enhances protections afforded to victims of sexual harassment or threats of violence, and simplifies the public's ability to submit complaints to the SOS Inspector General's office.

PRITZKER SPEAKING AT DAVOS WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

Gov. Pritzker will be in Davos, Switzerland this week for the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting. He will participate in four events: a panel on the American Legislative Landscape, a panel on new energy, a governor's policy meeting on industry infrastructure, and a roundtable on the COP28 climate change conference. He also plans to highlight Illinois policy and initiatives, including the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, the REV Act, and the Rebuild Illinois Capital Plan, as well as recent work on gun violence and reproductive health.

NEW DIRECTORS FOR CMS, DCEO; NEW TEMPORARY DIRECTORS FOR IDES AND DOIT

The Governor's office recently announced the following agency appointments: **Raven DeVaughn** will serve as Director of the Illinois Department of Central Management Services. **Kristin Richards** will serve as Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. **Ray Marchiori** will serve as Temporary Director of the Illinois Department of Employment Security. **Brandon Ragle** will serve as Temporary Secretary of the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology.

ONLINE COVID-19 TRACKER

The Discovery Partners Institute and the Illinois Department of Public Health have announced a new website (<https://iwss.uillinois.edu>) that tracks the levels of COVID-19 in wastewater samples in Chicago and other cities across the state. The interactive online tool builds on the statistics posted on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID Data Tracker website and provides more Illinois-specific data in easy-to-understand charts.

STERIGENICS SETTLEMENT

Sterigenics will pay \$408 million to settle more than 870 lawsuits alleging that its Willowbrook facility exposed residents to ethylene oxide gas and caused illnesses. The settlement came about after the jury hit the company with a \$363 million verdict for a Willowbrook cancer survivor.

QUARTZ HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION FINED

The Illinois Department of Insurance has fined Quartz Health Insurance Corporation \$500,000 for violating the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act. MHPAEA is the federal law requiring health insurance plans to have equivalent levels of coverage for mental health and substance use disorder care as for medical or surgical care, and Illinois law further expands upon those requirements.

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 January 8, 2023

Both chambers of the Illinois General Assembly returned to the State Capitol last week for a lame duck session scheduled from January 4 through 7 and on January 10. The Illinois Senate adjourned on Friday, January 6, and intends to re-convene Sunday, January 8 at 5 PM to continue work on many issues, including reproductive rights and firearm legislation. The House adjourned after midnight on Friday and will reconvene on Tuesday, January 10. It does not appear that there is consensus yet between the chambers on these high-profile bills. The inauguration for the Governor and other statewide constitutional officers is Monday, January 9, and the inauguration for members of the 103rd General Assembly is Wednesday, January 11.

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- January 11: Inauguration of the 103rd General Assembly
- January 27: Deadline – Senate Legislative Reference Bureau requests
- February 3: Deadline – House LRB requests
- February 10: Deadline – Introduction of Senate bills in the Senate
- February 15: Governor’s State of the State / Budget Address
- February 17: Deadline – Introduction of House Bills in the House
- February 28: Consolidated primary election
- March 10: Deadline – Senate bills out of Senate committee / House bills out of House committee
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- April 4: Consolidated Election (including community college trustee elections)
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- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

LAME DUCK LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

- ❖ **Healthcare Omnibus:** [House Bill 240](#) passed the Senate and is pending for concurrence in the House. Some of the provisions include: creation of state authorization for rural hospitals to operate under a new federal care delivery model as Rural Emergency Hospitals; allows applications for licensure as an applied behavioral analyst subject to IDFPR rule; and makes changes to the ARPA payments for ground ambulance providers.
- ❖ **Reproductive Health:** [Senate Bill 1534](#) has been sent to the Senate for concurrence. In response to the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, the Illinois House approved SB 1534 by a vote of 67-41, which creates the Patient and Provider Protection Act. The

legislation is designed to protect the licenses of health care professionals who provide abortion care and expand access to reproductive health and gender-affirming medications and procedures.

- NOTE: The Senate is expected to send a different version of this bill to the House for its concurrence. Advocates acknowledge there is “more work to be done” on matters too complex to finalize during the lame duck session.

- ❖ **Mandatory Paid Time Off:** [House Floor Amendment #3 to SB 208](#) would require all employers to provide 7 paid days off to employees. That amendment was not assigned for consideration and will likely appear again in the 103rd General Assembly.
- ❖ **FY 2022 Budget:** The Senate Appropriations Committee will hold a subject matter hearing on the FY23 supplemental appropriation bill, [HB 969](#) (Harris/Harmon), on Sunday at 3:30 PM. Amendments were still being filed Friday afternoon.
- ❖ Prior to adjourning Friday, the Senate filed **budget implementation** language as [Senate Floor Amendment #1 to HB 5052](#). SFA #1 has not been assigned for consideration at this time. Action is expected when the Senate returns on Sunday. Some of the key provisions include:
 - Creates the Warehouse Safety Standards Task Force Act to study warehouse safety standards.
 - Grants emergency rulemaking powers to the Department of Human Rights to implement a grant program to eradicate hate crimes and bias incidents and to the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to implement a local chamber of commerce recovery grant program.
 - Requires the Department of Children and Family Services to seek federal reimbursements for administrative costs associated with the provision of independent legal representation to foster children, and their parents. Units of local government and public and private agencies may apply for and receive federal or State funds from the Department in accordance with the purposes of the amendatory Act.
 - Requires the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to create a program to award grants to local chambers of commerce.
 - Makes changes concerning the distribution of lottery proceeds.
 - Repeals a provision that provided for a transfer of funds from the Statewide 9-1-1 Fund to the Statewide 9-8-8 Trust Fund.
 - Provides for transfers from the General Revenue Fund to the Budget Stabilization Fund, the Large Business Attraction Fund, and the Disaster Response and Recovery Fund. Increases the cap on the Budget Stabilization Fund from 5% to 7.5% of total general funds estimated for the fiscal year.
 - Provides \$460,000,000 in emergency stabilization payments to hospitals.
 - Contains trailer language to [HB 4285](#) to restore the small purchase limit in the Procurement Code to \$100,000.
- ❖ The House also filed **budget implementation** language as [HFA #3 to SB 1720](#) and passed the language over to the Senate right before it adjourned. The bill includes many of the items included in the Senate version, but adds **pay raises** for agency directors, constitutional officers (although Gov. JB Pritzker does not take a salary), and members of the General Assembly. The House passed the bill 63-35, with 20 members not voting.

- ❖ **Clean Energy:** The Senate Executive Committee approved [SFA # 1 to HB 4412](#), which makes several clean energy changes, including: (1) reforming citing requirements for wind and solar; (2) creating a mechanism for financial relief for electrical rate payers in the MISO region (subject to appropriation); (3) makes changes to Climate Works HUB language; (4) makes changes to public school carbon free assessments program; and (5) makes changes to the hiring of the director of the Illinois Power Authority. SFA # 2 and SFA # 3 have been filed and are pending before the full Senate.

- ❖ **Gun Control:** The Illinois House approved legislation, by a vote of 64-43, in response to the July 4, 2022 shootings and gun violence in Highland Park. As amended, [SB 2226](#) immediately bans the sale of assault weapons and prevents sales of large-capacity magazines that hold more than 12 rounds. The bill grandfathers existing gun owners who have their weapon properly registered. Exemptions to the firearm purchase provisions are included for active-duty law enforcement and retirees who have served in law enforcement for over 10 years. The legislation extends the duration of firearm restraining orders from six months to a year. The final bill did NOT raise the minimum age to purchase a firearm.
 - NOTE: SB 2226 passed the House is now pending in the Senate on concurrence. Gov. Pritzker, who supports the legislation and was on the House floor during its passage, said that he looks forward to working with the Senate to pass the legislation as quickly as possible.

- ❖ **Bills That Passed Both Chambers:** The following bills passed both chambers last week and will be sent to the Governor for his consideration:
 - [HB 1859](#) is an initiative of the **Cook County Forest Preserve District** that allows the district to make a full actuarial payment into its pension system.
 - [HB 3878](#), as amended, increases the revenue source for the Illinois Housing Development Authority's **Rental Support Program**. It creates the Illinois Rental Housing Support Program Funding Allocation Task Force, which will study and make recommendations regarding the equitable distribution of rental housing support funds throughout Illinois.
 - [HB 4228](#) makes several changes to the **Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act** including removing school districts from the Act and allowing certain highway commissioners and townships to form a joint committee.
 - [HB 4285](#), as amended, makes various **procurement** changes. Trailer language to restore the purchasing threshold to \$100,000 is in [HB 5052](#).
 - [HB 5542](#) makes changes to the **Illinois Joining Forces Foundation** per their request.
 - [SB 1794](#), as amended, represents a reform of the **municipal utility audit process** in Illinois.
 - [HB 9](#) allows individuals to change their gender on their **birth certificates** to the gender of their choice.
 - [HB 45](#) makes changes concerning the **verification of voter signatures**, provides each political party, candidate and qualified civic organization are entitled to have present one poll watcher for each panel of election judges at each place where vote by mail voters' ballots are processed, and makes changes to judicial districts.

- ❖ **Other Legislation Under Consideration:** Several bills remain active in the process currently including:
 - [SB 2801](#) contains appropriations necessary to implement the agreement to repay the balance in the **Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund**. The bill passed the House Executive Committee and is pending before the full House.

- [HB 5061](#) is a trailer bill to the Regional Water Commission legislation passed last year that allows for the building a **new pipeline** to supply water for Joliet and the surrounding areas. HB 5061 passed the Senate and is in the House on the Order of Concurrence.
- [HB 2369](#) represents a trailer bill to the **Veteran's Assistance Commission Act** and is in the House on the Order of Concurrence.

STACY BENNETT TO FINISH HUSBAND'S TERM

Sen. Scott Bennett's widow, **Dr. Stacy Bennett**, was sworn in to finish the final few weeks of his current term. Dr. Bennett (who is a research associate in the Office of Community College Research and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) will not seek the appointment to the two-year term that begins at noon, January 11. Nine applicants were vying for the late Senator's two-year term in the 103rd General Assembly. City of Champaign Township Assessor **Paul Faraci** was ultimately chosen for the appointment over **Rep. Carol Ammons** (D-Urbana) and Champaign County Democratic Chair **Mike Ingram**.

OTHER NEW LAWMAKERS

- ❖ **Jason Huffman**, a Menard County sheriff's deputy, was appointed to the 87th District for the remaining term of Rep. **Tim Butler**, who resigned to work with the Illinois Railroad Association. The seat will go to **Mike Coffey** of Springfield, manager of Springfield restaurant Saputo's and owner of restaurant Papa Frank's, in the 103rd General Assembly.
- ❖ **Terry Hall** was appointed to fill out the remainder of Senator **Melinda Bush**'s term in the 102nd General Assembly. **Mary Edly-Allen**, who won election in November, will be sworn into office to replace Bush in the 103rd General Assembly.
- ❖ **Bill Hauter** was sworn in to replace Rep. **Keith Sommer**, who resigned at the end of the year. Sommer did not seek reelection in 2022. Hauter was elected in November to serve in the 103rd General Assembly.

GEN Z JOINS THE 103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 103rd General Assembly will be sworn into session at noon on Wednesday, January 11. Among the new members are **Nabeela Syed** and **Brad Fritts** – both just 23 years old – who will be sworn in as state representatives, marking the advent of Gen Z into the legislature. Syed is a Democrat and Fritts is a Republican.

PRITZKER ON HIS 2ND TERM AGENDA

In recent interviews, Gov. Pritzker has said that he intends to make improving education, from early childhood through college, and expanding access to childcare major priorities of the coming term. That includes proposals to make public colleges tuition-free for students whose families earn at or below the median income and to raise the income cutoff for families to qualify state childcare assistance. He also wants to expand the availability of childcare statewide and of mental health and substance abuse treatment, particularly downstate. The Governor will formally announce his policy and spending priorities in his upcoming combined State of the State and Budget Address on February 15.

ILBC LEADERSHIP ANNOUNCED

The Illinois Legislative Black Caucus has selected its incoming leadership team for the 103rd General Assembly. Rep. **Carol Ammons** will serve as chair, Sen. **Adriane Johnson** will serve as treasurer, Rep. **Debbie Meyers-Martin** will serve as secretary, and Rep. **Will Davis** will serve as sergeant at arms. Rep. **Lakesia Collins** will chair the House Black Caucus, with Sen. **Robert Peters** as Senate Black Caucus chair.

PRITZKER ANNOUNCED SECOND-TERM TRANSITIONS

Gov. Pritzker has announced a series of administrative changes as he begins his second term in office.

- ❖ Illinois Department of Natural Resources director Colleen Callahan will step down from her position on January 16.
- ❖ Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity director Sylvia Garcia will step down from her position on January 16.
- ❖ Illinois Central Management Services director Anthony Pascente will step down from his position on January 20.
- ❖ Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology secretary Jennifer Ricker will step down from her position at the end of the term.

The administration will announce their successors in the coming weeks.

ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY CERTIFICATE RENAMED

A new law has removed a long-standing stigma for people who earn an Illinois High School Equivalency Certificate. Starting January 1, 2023, that certificate has been renamed the State of Illinois High School Diploma to more accurately reflect the equal value of that diploma and traditional diplomas earned at high schools across Illinois. The change will help Illinois graduates establish reciprocity with educational requirements in other states.

FALL FRESHMAN ENROLLMENT UP 5 PERCENT AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Freshman enrollment at Illinois public universities was up by 5% for the fall semester compared to last year, breaking with national trends that saw a 2.4% decrease, the Illinois Board of Higher Education announced. Nine out of the state's 12 public institutions reported an increase. The state also outpaced national trends in African-American and Latino freshman enrollment, increasing by 12.9% this fall compared to a national decrease of 0.7%. While freshman enrollment was up, overall enrollment was still down 1.3% in Illinois year-over-year, compared to a 1.6% nationally.

PRE-TRIAL FAIRNESS ACT ON HOLD

The Illinois Supreme Court has issued a hold on the Illinois Pre-Trial Fairness Act until further notice, leaving cash bail still in effect. This comes after a Kankakee County judge ruled parts of the Act unconstitutional last week. The court's decision means that every county in the state must maintain a cash bail system until further

notice. The Act was supposed to go into effect on January 1 and eliminate cash bail. The Supreme Court's decision was to maintain consistency in trial procedures across the state until the legal challenges are settled. Other portions of the SAFE-T Act, including new requirements for body cameras and police training, still went into effect. The Supreme Court will hear oral arguments about the constitutionality of the SAFE-T Act's elimination of cash bail in March.

REIMAGINING ELECTRIC VEHICLES ACT AMENDED

Gov. Pritzker has signed an amendment to the Reimagining Electric Vehicles in Illinois Act, further incentivizing EV production across the state. The new incentives will support existing Illinois automakers seeking to transform their current plants into EV production plants, bolster the state's entire EV ecosystem by giving manufacturers the ability to ramp up production of EV parts, and provide those manufacturers with additional flexibility in determining which incentives work best for them as the market evolves. Specifically, the tax credit available to Illinois automakers that retain employees as they transition to EV production is increased to 75% of their income tax at the statewide level and 100% of their income tax if they operate in an Underserved or Energy Transition Area.

EMPLOYMENT LAWS POSTER UPDATED FOR 2023

The Illinois Department of Labor has released the 2023 version of the "Your Rights Under Illinois Employment Laws" Poster. This poster is required to be displayed in the workplace. The poster is available in [English](#), [Polish](#) and [Spanish](#) on IDOL's website, along with a summary of posting requirements and the full text of each law.

PRITZKER SIGNS BILL DIVESTING STATE FUNDS FROM RUSSIAN INVESTMENTS

State pension funds will be completely divested from Russian and Belarussian banks and investments under legislation signed by Gov. Pritzker. [HB 1293](#) will affect less than .0005% of state funds. The divestment is intended to show continued support for Ukraine in the ongoing conflict against Russian aggression in Eastern Europe. Illinois continues to accept Ukrainian refugees displaced by the conflict. Last year 70,000 Ukrainian refugees came to the United States.

ILLINOIS CYBER SECURITY COMMISSION EO EXTENDED

Gov. Pritzker has extended the Illinois Cyber Security Commission's executive order to support a strong coordination effort across all levels of government to enhance cyber security. The Commission will continue working to develop recommendations for protecting valuable information by identifying and disrupting cyber-attacks, developing cross-sector and community training exercises for critical infrastructure partners, and supporting regional critical infrastructure cyber response teams.

NEXT CANNABIS DISPENSARY LICENSE LOTTERY SET FOR JANUARY

The state of Illinois will begin accepting applications for the next round of cannabis dispensary licenses beginning this month. The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation will make 55 licenses available to be distributed across the state's 17 Bureau of Labor Statistics regions. Applications will be accepted from January 30, 2023, through February 14, 2023.

VETERANS' GRANT RECIPIENTS ANNOUNCED

The Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs announced the first quarter of FY23 Veterans' Grant Recipients of nearly \$350,000 awarded to organizations that provide vital services to veterans, including homelessness, and post-traumatic stress treatment, health insurance costs, long-term care, disability benefits, and employment and employment training. The grant is funded by the Winter Winnings Illinois Lottery ticket.

RECORD-SETTING YEAR FOR ADULT USE CANNABIS SALES

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation has reported 2022 set adult use cannabis sales records in all categories. This includes number of items sold, sales totals to Illinois and out-of-state residents, and sales total by month. For the year, Illinois adult use cannabis dispensaries sold \$1,552,324,820.37 worth of product, an increase of more than 12% from 2021 and 131% from 2020, the first-year cannabis sales were first legally allowed in Illinois. There are currently 113 adult use cannabis dispensaries in Illinois, including the first three social equity dispensaries that opened their doors in 2022. These figures do not include taxes collected, which are reported by the Illinois Department of Revenue.

EMERGENCY SERVICES FOR MIGRANTS

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot is asking the Illinois General Assembly for \$54 million to help fund emergency services for asylum-seeking individuals and migrants. The Pritzker administration announced that state funds will no longer be able to support city migrant service efforts as of February 1. To date, the State has offered nearly \$120 million toward the effort.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER GRANTS

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority is requesting proposals for grants for Community Healing Resource Centers. Grants will be made with Trauma Recovery and Community Healing Resource Center FY23 funds. A total of \$1,900,000 in funding in Trauma Recovery and Community Healing Resource Center funds is available through this solicitation for use over a period of four months.

SECRETARY OF STATE-ELECT GIANNOULIAS ANNOUNCES KEY STAFF

Secretary of State-Elect Alexi Giannoulias has announced the appointment of the following staff members: Kathleen Nelson, Chief of Staff; Sheleda Doss, Chief Deputy/Downstate Operations; Aileen Kim, Chief Deputy/Public Programs; Aimee Pine, Chief Deputy/Administrative Operations; Lashaunna D. Sims-Davis (Shaunna), Chief Deputy/External Affairs; and Vanessa Uribe, Chief Deputy/Driver's-Vehicles Services.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report January 23, 2023

Both chambers of the Illinois General Assembly were in-district last week. The Senate will return to Springfield on January 24, while the House of Representatives will return on January 31. Bills are now being filed, and committees and committee membership will be announced in the coming days.

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

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

MORE LEADERSHIP / COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Senate President Don Harmon has released the names of his full **Senate Democrat** leadership team:

- Majority Leader: Sen. **Kimberly A. Lightford**
- President Pro Tempore: Sen. **Bill Cunningham**
- Assistant Majority Leaders: Sens. **Mattie Hunter, Linda Holmes, David Koehler, Laura M. Murphy**
- Majority Caucus Chair: Sen. **Omar Aquino**
- Majority Caucus Whips: Sens. **Julie Morrison, Napoleon B. Harris, Ili, Cristina Castro**
- Majority Caucus Appropriations Leader: Sen. **Elgie R. Sims Jr.**

Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch has announced **House committees** (43 in all) and their respective chairs. There are only 40 members of the House GOP caucus:

House Committee

Appropriations – Elementary and Secondary Education
Appropriations – General Services
Appropriations – Health and Human Services
Appropriations – Higher Education
Appropriations – Public Safety
Adoption and Child Welfare
Agriculture and Conservation
Childcare Access and Early Childhood Education
Cities and Villages
Consumer Protection
Counties and Townships
Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, and IT
Economic Opportunity and Equity
Elem/Sec Education: Admin, Licensing and Charters
Elem/Sec Education: School Curriculum & Policies
Energy and Environment
Ethics and Elections
Executive

Chair

Rep. **William Davis**
Rep. **Fred Crespo**
Rep. **Camille Lilly**
Rep. **La Shawn Ford**
Rep. **Rita Mayfield**
Rep. **Terra Costa Howard**
Rep. **Sonya Harper**
Rep. **Joyce Mason**
Rep. **Anthony DeLuca**
Rep. **Debbie Meyers-Martin**
Rep. **Curtis Tarver**
Rep. **Lamont Robinson**
Rep. **Edgar Gonzalez, Jr.**
Rep. **Sue Scherer**
Rep. **Michelle Mussman**
Rep. **Ann Williams**
Rep. **Maurice West**
Rep. **Robert Rita**

Financial Institutions and Licensing
Gaming
Health Care Licenses
Health Care Availability and Access
Higher Education
Housing
Human Services
Immigration and Human Rights
Insurance
Judiciary - Civil
Judiciary - Criminal
Labor and Commerce
Mental Health
Personnel and Pensions
Police and Fire
Prescription Drug Affordability
Public Health
Public Utilities
Restorative Justice
Revenue and Finance
Small Business, Tech Innovation and Entrepreneurship
State Government Administration
Transportation: Rail Systems, Roads and Bridges
Transportation: Vehicle Safety
Veterans' Affairs

Rep. **Margaret Croke**
Rep. **Daniel Didech**
Rep. **Bob Morgan**
Rep. **Lakesia Collins**
Rep. **Katie Stuart**
Rep. **Will Guzzardi**
Rep. **Anna Moeller**
Rep. **Eva-Dina Delgado**
Rep. **Thaddeus Jones**
Rep. **Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz**
Rep. **Justin Slaughter**
Rep. **Marcus Evans, Jr.**
Rep. **Lindsey LaPointe**
Rep. **Stephanie Kifowit**
Rep. **Frances Ann Hurley**
Rep. **Jawaharial Williams**
Rep. **Anne Stava-Murray**
Rep. **Lawrence Walsh Jr.**
Rep. **Kelly Cassidy**
Rep. **Kelly Burke**
Rep. **Carol Ammons**
Rep. **Mark Walker**
Rep. **Martin Moylan**
Rep. **Jaime Andrade, Jr.**
Rep. **Lance Yednock**

IBHE APPROVES FY24 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

The Illinois Board of Higher Education has approved a Fiscal Year 2024 budget recommendation that increases funding to support the equity-driven higher education strategic plan adopted in June 2021. The \$2.5 billion proposal would reflect a 7.7% (\$180 million) increase for general funds. Highlights include:

- \$50 million increase for the Monetary Award Program
- \$86.3 million (7.5%) increase for public universities – distributed through an equity lens
- \$24.9 million (7.5%) increase for community colleges
- \$4.1 million (7.5%) increase for adult education and career and technical education
- \$2.8 million increase to the Minority Teachers of Illinois scholarship program
- \$1.5 million (7.5%) increase for the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy
- \$0.53 million for the Illinois Teachers Loan Repayment Program
- \$3.2 million for a new Dual Credit Grants program
- \$5.2 million for new Non-Credit Workforce Training Grants

INCOME TAX PROPOSALS INTRODUCED

Sen. **Robert Martwick** (D-Chicago) indicated that he will reintroduce a constitutional amendment to impose a **graduated income tax** in Illinois. Voters rejected a similar constitutional amendment in November 2020. Martwick plans to target new revenues generated by the tax to property tax relief and pension debt.

In addition, legislators in Illinois and other states are working to introduce "**wealth taxes**" that aim to generate revenue. The *Washington Post* reported that legislators in 4 states, including Illinois, will introduce a tax on wealthy people's holdings, or so-called "mark-to-market" taxes on their unrealized capital gains. Rep. **Will Guzzardi** (D-Chicago) will sponsor the package in the House, and Sen. **Robert Peters** (D-Chicago) will sponsor in the Senate.

JCAR MEMBERSHIP

The Joint Committee on Administrative Rules is welcoming new member Sen. **Cristina Castro**, D-Elgin. Castro was chosen by the Senate Democratic caucus to replace Senate President Harmon. Democratic Reps. **Eva Dina Delgado** of Chicago and **Dave Vella** of Loves Park have also been appointed. They replace former Representative and now Senator, Mike Halpin (D-Rock Island), and Rep. Fran Hurley (D-Chicago). The terms for former Republican members Rep. Keith Wheeler and Rep. Tom Demmer have expired, but their replacements have not yet been named.

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- January 27: Deadline – Senate Legislative Reference Bureau requests
- February 3: Deadline – House LRB requests
- February 10: Deadline – Introduction of Senate bills in the Senate
- February 15: Governor's State of the State / Budget Address
- February 17: Deadline – Introduction of House Bills in the House
- February 28: Consolidated primary election
- March 10: Deadline – Senate bills out of Senate committee / House bills out of House committee
- March 24: Deadline – Third Reading of House bills in the House
- March 31: Deadline – Third Reading of Senate bills in the Senate
- April 4: Consolidated Election (including community college trustee elections)
- April 28: Deadline – House bills out of Senate committee / Senate bills out of House committee
- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

CAMPAIGN FUNDS

House Speaker Welch has reported raising \$14.2 million for his personal campaign committee in 2022. Senate President Harmon reported raising about \$11.9 million during the same period. Then-House Republican Leader **Jim Durkin** reported raising \$4.5 million in 2022, less than a third of Welch's total. Then-Senate Republican Leader **Dan McConchie** reported raising \$5.2 million, about 44 percent of Harmon's total.

SECRETARY OF STATE AGENDA

Secretary of State **Alexi Giannoulas** is pledging to modernize the state agency with technology, issue digital driver's licenses and IDs, and develop strategies to streamline the customer experience. He will hold a statewide listening tour for the public at driver's services facilities, libraries, and voter registration sites. His new administration will also audit SOS facilities to see what improvements should be made. The full transition report is available [HERE](#).

UPDATES ON NEW ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

After passage and signing of Illinois' new ban on assault weapons, at least 30 of the state's 102 county sheriffs released letters saying that they will not enforce the new law requiring owners of existing assault weapons to register their weapons with the state. Several state and federal lawsuits have been filed, arguing that the new law is unconstitutional. A judge in Effingham County issued a Temporary Restraining Order on January 20, suspending the new law for the 860-plus individuals who sued the state. The Illinois Attorney General's office has already filed a notice of appeal.

NEW STATE WATER PLAN

The [Illinois State Water Plan](#) has now been updated for the first time since 1984. The report was prepared by members of the Illinois State Water Plan Task Force and highlights 13 key water issues. It also recommends necessary changes and strategic plan with 147 actionable and measurable recommendations for future inclusive and equitable state water resources development.

UTILITIES REQUEST RATE HIKE

People's Gas is asking the Illinois Commerce Commission to approve a \$402 million rate hike, the utility's largest increase request. Chicago residents could see their monthly natural gas bill rise by an average of \$11.83 next year if approved.

ComEd also filed for a four-year, \$1.47 billion rate increase to bolster its grid for the demands of electric vehicles, electrification, and climate change. If approved by state regulators, ComEd customers will pay an average of \$17 per month more for delivery charges by 2027. The ICC will review the rate and grid plans and is expected to issue a decision by December.

REPORT PREDICTS BILLIONS IN MOTOR FUEL TAX REVENUE LOSSES IF STATE MEETS EV GOALS

A new report from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute is warning of a potential steep decline in transportation revenue as the process of electrification accelerates. The primary issue is motor fuel taxes, which will see a significant drop as more electric vehicles make their way to the road and fewer people fill their cars with gas. Since motor fuel taxes make up the backbone of state funding for road and bridge projects, ILEP (which has strong ties to organized labor) warns that new revenue sources will have to be identified to ensure that the state's 10-year capital improvements plan remains on track.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report January 30, 2023

The Illinois Senate convened very briefly for session in Springfield last week before adjourning early to try to beat the incoming snowstorm. The Illinois House returns to session on Tuesday, January 31. The Senate does not return until Tuesday, February 7.

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

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

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- February 3: Deadline – House LRB requests
- February 10: Deadline – Introduction of Senate bills in the Senate
- February 15: Governor's State of the State / Budget Address
- February 17: Deadline – Introduction of House Bills in the House
- February 28: Consolidated primary election
- March 10: Deadline – Senate bills out of Senate committee / House bills out of House committee
- March 24: Deadline – Third Reading of House bills in the House
- March 31: Deadline – Third Reading of Senate bills in the Senate
- April 4: Consolidated Election (including community college trustee elections)
- April 28: Deadline – House bills out of Senate committee / Senate bills out of House committee
- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

MORE LEGISLATIVE LEADERS ANNOUNCED

Senate Democrats have published their leadership team for the 103rd General Assembly:

- Senator **Kimberly Lightford** - Majority Leader
- Senator **Bill Cunningham** - President Pro Tempore
- Senator **Mattie Hunter** - Assistant Majority Leader
- Senator **Linda Holmes** - Assistant Majority Leader
- Senator **David Koehler** - Assistant Majority Leader
- Senator **Laura Murphy** - Assistant Majority Leader
- Senator **Omar Aquino** - Majority Caucus Chair
- Senator **Julie Morrison** - Majority Caucus Whip
- Senator **Napoleon Harris III** - Majority Caucus Whip
- Senator **Cristina Castro** - Majority Caucus Whip
- Senator **Elgie Sims Jr.** - Majority Caucus Appropriations Leader

House Republican Leader **Tony McCombie** has announced the House Republicans' budget team, naming Deputy Leader **Norine Hammond** (Macomb) as Chief Budgeteer for the caucus. Rep. **Amy Elik** (Alton) will be elevated to Deputy Budgeteer. They join Democratic Speaker Pro Tempore **Jehan Gordon-Booth** (Peoria) and Leader **Robyn Gabel** (Evanston).

EXECUTIVE DEPARTURES AND APPOINTMENTS

Illinois Deputy Governor **Christian Mitchell**, who has overseen environment, infrastructure, and public safety issues since the beginning of Gov. JB Pritzker's first term, is leaving the Governor's office at the beginning of March.

Gov. Pritzker has announced the following re-appointments in his administration: **Marc Smith** will continue to serve as Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. **John Kim** will continue to serve as Director of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency. **Jane Flanagan** will continue to serve as the Director of the Illinois Department of Labor. **Dana Popish Severinghaus** will continue to serve as the Director of the Department of Insurance. **Theresa Eagleson** will continue to serve as Director of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services.

ILLINOIS PAYS OFF REMAINING UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION DEBT

Illinois has paid off its remaining debt to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund that was placed under major stress by COVID-19-related economic struggles. The \$1.36 billion balance was paid after a deal was reached between the state, the business community, the labor community, and legislators through the agreed bill process. The legislation appropriating the funds also included a \$450 million infusion into the Trust Fund to shore it up against future economic downturns.

\$13 MILLION ANNOUNCED FOR ILLINOIS WORKS PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM EXPANSION

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has awarded \$13 million to 30 recipients to expand the Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship Program, which creates a qualified talent pipeline of diverse candidates in construction and the building trades. The program's second year expands access to the program across the state and will serve up to 1,400 pre-apprentices – a 40% increase from the program's inaugural year. Participants of the program attend tuition-free and receive a stipend and other supportive, barrier reduction services to help enter the construction industry. Upon completion of the program, pre-apprentices receive industry aligned certifications which will prepare and qualify them to continue to a registered apprenticeship program in one of the trades.

MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE ACTION PLAN WEB EVENT

The Illinois Supreme Court's Mental Health Task Force will host a web event on Thursday, February 2, from 12:15-1 PM. Information is available at illinoiscourts.gov or by contacting Scott Block, Statewide Behavioral Health Administrator, Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, at sblock@illinoiscourts.gov or 312-793-1876.

\$113.8 MILLION RELEASED IN DOWNSTATE TRANSIT GRANTS

As part of the ongoing Rebuild Illinois infrastructure initiative, the Illinois Department of Transportation announced another round of funding for downstate public transit providers totaling \$113.8 million. With this

latest round of funding, the state has provided \$337.8 million total in competitive transit grants. The funding is being awarded to 32 transit systems to support a total of 44 projects in areas including St. Clair County, the Champaign-Urbana region, Rock Island County, and Sangamon County.

SOS SETTLES WITH CARVANA

Illinois Secretary of State **Alexi Giannoulis** has entered into a settlement agreement with online used-car retailer Carvana, which admitted to violating Illinois law and agreed to abide by new restrictions aimed at protecting consumers. Illinois began investigating Carvana's practices in February 2022 after customers alleged it was issuing out-of-state temporary registration permits and for failing to transfer titles in a timely manner as required by the state's vehicle code. Illinois was the first state in the nation to suspend Carvana's license in May 2022.

SECRETARY OF STATE REJECTED NEARLY 400 VANITY PLATES IN 2022

The Illinois Secretary of State's office rejected nearly 400 vanity plates in 2022 for containing lewd language. SOS Giannoulis said that 54,236 vanity plates were requested last year; 383 were rejected for being offensive or difficult to read. Among those rejected include PEEPEE, GOTPOOP, SUCKER, KISSASH, SUKIT, BITEU, DUCKYOU, COKAIN, HAILNO, WHTHFUK and WMWWWMW.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report February 6, 2023

The Illinois House returned to session last Tuesday, January 31 and adopted its rules for the 103rd General Assembly. Notable changes include the elimination of remote floor voting (virtual committee testimony will still be allowed), and the Rules Committee is no longer required to refer every bill to a committee. Both chambers reconvene in Springfield on Tuesday, February 7.

To date, 1,307 bills have been filed in the Senate, and 2,132 bill have been filed in the House. The bill filing deadline for the Senate is this Friday, February 10, and Friday, February 17 in the House.

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

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

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- February 10: Deadline – Introduction of Senate bills in the Senate
- February 15: Governor's State of the State / Budget Address
- February 17: Deadline – Introduction of House Bills in the House
- February 28: Consolidated primary election
- March 10: Deadline – Senate bills out of Senate committee / House bills out of House committee
- March 24: Deadline – Third Reading of House bills in the House
- March 31: Deadline – Third Reading of Senate bills in the Senate
- April 4: Consolidated Election (including community college trustee elections)
- April 28: Deadline – House bills out of Senate committee / Senate bills out of House committee
- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

COMMITTEE CHAIR ASSIGNMENTS ANNOUNCED

Both chambers have set their committees and appointed members, allowing committee work to begin.

SENATE committee chair and minority spokespersons for the 103rd General Assembly:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Minority Spokesperson</u>
Agriculture	Sen. Doris Turner	Sen. Win Stoller
Approp. – Education	Sen. Meg Loughran Cappel	Sen. Tom Bennett
Approp. - Health and Human Services	Sen. Ann Gillespie	Sen. Dave Syverson
Appro. - Public Safety and Infrastructure	Sen. Chris Belt	Sen. Seth Lewis
Appropriations	Sen. Elgie Sims Jr.	Sen. Chapin Rose

Assignments	Sen. Kimberly Lightford	Sen. Neil Anderson
Behavioral and Mental Health	Sen. Laura Fine	Sen. Terri Bryant
Early Childhood Education	Sen. Cristina Pacione-Zayas	Sen. Sue Rezin
Education	Sen. Adriane Johnson	Sen. Dan McConchie
Energy and Public Utilities	Sen. Steve Stadelman	Sen. Terri Bryant
Environment and Conservation	Sen. Laura Ellman	Sen. Andrew Chesney
Executive	Sen. Cristina Castro	Sen. Neil Anderson
Executive Appointments	Sen. Laura Murphy	Sen. Jason Plummer
Financial Institutions	Sen. Sara Feigenholtz	Sen. Jason Plummer
Health and Human Services	Sen. Julie Morrison	Sen. Dave Syverson
Higher Education	Sen. Michael Halpin	Sen. Dale Fowler
Human Rights	Sen. Mike Simmons	Sen. Dan McConchie
Insurance	Sen. Napoleon Harris III	Sen. Dave Syverson
Judiciary	Sen. Robert Martwick	Sen. Jil Tracy
Labor	Sen. Robert Peters	Sen. Craig Wilcox
Licensed Activities	Sen. Suzy Glowiak Hilton	Sen. Steve McClure
Local Government	Sen. Patricia Van Pelt	Sen. Erica Harriss
Public Health	Sen. Karina Villa	Sen. Seth Lewis
Revenue	Sen. Celina Villanueva	Sen. Don DeWitte
Special Committee on Pensions	Sen. Robert Martwick	---
State Government	Sen. Patrick Joyce	Sen. Sally Turner
Transportation	Sen. Ram Villivalam	Sen. Don DeWitte
Veterans Affairs	Sen. Julie Morrison	Sen. Craig Wilcox

HOUSE committee chair and minority spokespersons for the 103rd General Assembly:

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Chair</u>	<u>Minority Spokesperson</u>
Approp. – Elem./Sec Education	Rep. William Davis	Rep. Blaine Wilhour
Approp. – General Services	Rep. Fred Crespo	Rep. Brad Halbrook
Approp. – Health and Human Services	Rep. Camille Lilly	Rep. Tom Weber
Approp. – Higher Education	Rep. La Shawn Ford	Rep. Dave Severin
Approp. – Public Safety	Rep. Rita Mayfield	Rep. John Cabello
Adoption and Child Welfare	Rep. Terra Costa Howard	Rep. Steve Reick
Agriculture and Conservation	Rep. Sonya Harper	Rep. Charles Meier
Childcare Access and Early Childhood Edu.	Rep. Joyce Mason	Rep. Randy Frese
Cities and Villages	Rep. Anthony DeLuca	Rep. Bradley Stephens
Consumer Protection	Rep. Debbie Meyers-Martin	Rep. Tom Weber
Counties and Townships	Rep. Curtis Tarver	Rep. Brad Halbrook
Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, and IT	Rep. Lamont Robinson	Rep. Dan Caulkins
Economic Opportunity and Equity	Rep. Edgar Gonzalez, Jr.	Rep. Chris Miller
Elem/Sec Edu: Admin, Licensing and Charters	Rep. Sue Scherer	Rep. Tim Ozinga
Elem/Sec Edu: School Curriculum & Policies	Rep. Michelle Mussman	Rep. Daniel Swanson
Energy and Environment	Rep. Ann Williams	Rep. Dave Severin
Ethics and Elections	Rep. Maurice West	Rep. Ryan Spain
Executive	Rep. Robert Rita	Rep. Ryan Spain
Financial Institutions and Licensing	Rep. Margaret Croke	Rep. Dan Ugaste
Gaming	Rep. Daniel Didech	Rep. Jeff Keicher
Health Care Licenses	Rep. Bob Morgan	Rep. Randy Frese

Health Care Availability and Access	Rep. Lakesia Collins	Rep. Jackie Haas
Higher Education	Rep. Katie Stuart	Rep. Daniel Swanson
Housing	Rep. Will Guzzardi	Rep. Amy Grant
Human Services	Rep. Anna Moeller	Rep. Norine Hammond
Immigration and Human Rights	Rep. Eva-Dina Delgado	Rep. Jeff Keicher
Insurance	Rep. Thaddeus Jones	Rep. Jeff Keicher
Judiciary - Civil	Rep. Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz	Rep. Dan Ugaste
Judiciary - Criminal	Rep. Justin Slaughter	Rep. Patrick Windhorst
Labor and Commerce	Rep. Marcus Evans, Jr.	Rep. Dan Ugaste
Mental Health	Rep. Lindsey LaPointe	Rep. Jackie Haas
Personnel and Pensions	Rep. Stephanie Kifowit	Rep. Steve Reick
Police and Fire	Rep. Frances Ann Hurley	Rep. John Cabello
Prescription Drug Affordability	Rep. Jawaharial Williams	Rep. Dan Caulkins
Public Health	Rep. Anne Stava-Murray	Rep. Chris Miller
Public Utilities	Rep. Lawrence Walsh Jr.	Rep. C.D. Davidsmeyer
Restorative Justice	Rep. Kelly Cassidy	Rep. Patrick Windhorst
Revenue and Finance	Rep. Kelly Burke	Rep. Joe Sosnowski
Small Business, Tech & Entrepreneurship	Rep. Carol Ammons	Rep. Blaine Wilhour
State Government Administration	Rep. Mark Walker	Rep. Wayne Rosenthal
Transportation: Rail, Roads, and Bridges	Rep. Martin Moylan	Rep. Michael Marron
Transportation: Vehicle Safety	Rep. Jaime Andrade, Jr.	Rep. Wayne Rosenthal
Veterans' Affairs	Rep. Lance Yednock	Rep. Daniel Swanson

STATE COVID-19 DISASTER PROCLAMATION ENDS MAY 11

The state's public health emergency will end on May 11, 2023, aligning the state with the federal government's decision to end the national COVID 19 public health emergency.

NEW STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION NAMED

The Illinois State Board of Education has appointed School District U-46 Superintendent **Dr. Tony Sanders** the new state superintendent of education after a nationwide search. He will assume his duties in late February. ISBE Deputy Education Officer **Krish Mohip** will serve as interim state superintendent of education during the transition. Dr. **Carmen I. Ayala's** term as state superintendent concluded January 31. She announced her retirement after 40 years of service and leadership in Illinois public schools.

DECEMBER COGFA REPORT SHOWS SLOWDOWN

The December 2022 Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability report shed light on how tax and fee hikes passed by lawmakers in 2019 – such as tobacco, gaming, and motor fuel - have raised revenue to pay for Rebuild Illinois and other infrastructure projects. But the report also shows some revenue sources in the current year are beginning to slow down. After months of robust levels of growth for much of the fiscal year, two of the major taxing sources (personal income tax and sales tax receipts) experienced a noticeable slowdown in December. While this weaker performance is noteworthy, it will take several more months of data to see whether this is the start of a significant downward trend in these receipts, or if the slowdown is simply due to a timing element related to the reporting of receipts over the last month.

ILLINOIS RANKED BEST IN MIDWEST FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Illinois has been named the number one leader for workforce development in the Midwest region for 2022, up from number two in 2021. The ranking highlights Illinois' commitment to providing innovative workforce programs, career training, and employment services that create resources for jobseekers and ensure businesses continue to thrive. The ranking, announced by *Site Selection* magazine, recognizes "states that performed well in a set of measures that gauge workforce-related aspects of states' overall employment climate." It combines information from CNBC, U.S. News, and other organizations.

IBHE AWARDS \$10.5 MILLION TO SUPPORT STUDENT SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS

The Illinois Board of Higher Education Friday has awarded \$10.5 million in state funds to state colleges and universities to support social-emotional learning supports for students. The Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund dollars are specifically designed to support academic advising, student counseling, and technical resources that will help students earn a degree.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS RENOVATIONS ANNOUNCED

Construction will begin soon for the Illini Hall Replacement and Altgeld Hall Renovation Project at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus. The project is funded by the state construction program, \$40 million from University of Illinois System's Illinois Innovation Network, and \$52 million in institutional contributions. The project includes a complete restoration of Altgeld Hall, the demolition of Illini Hall, and the construction of a new 140,000-square-foot facility to replace Illini Hall. The project includes a new data science center as part of the Champaign-Urbana hub of the U of I System-led Illinois Innovation Network. New classrooms, lecture spaces, and collaboration areas will be added to both buildings. The Illinois Capital Development Board will oversee the multi-phase project, slated to conclude in 2026.

JCAR MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

The Joint Committee on Administrative Rules welcomes new member and co-chair **Rep. Ryan Spain** (R-Peoria) along with new members **Sen. Dale Fowler** (R-Harrisburg) and **Rep. Jackie Haas** (R-Bourbonnais). Rep. Spain succeeds former member Rep. **Keith Wheeler** (R-Oswego) as co-chair. Sen. Fowler succeeds Sen. **John Curran** (R-Downers Grove). Rep. Haas succeeds former Rep. **Tom Demmer** (R-Dixon).

STRONG CANNABIS SALES IN JANUARY

Cannabis dispensaries sold more than 3 million items, with sales totaling nearly \$128M for the month of January.

COMED RATE UPDATE

A hefty slice of the \$1.5 billion in rate hikes sought by Commonwealth Edison is not due to grid-improving investments but to simple math. ComEd is proposing that its return on equity rise to 10.5% in 2024 and go up each year, landing at 10.65% in 2027. The rate hike pending before the Illinois Commerce Commission would raise the average household's electric bill by an average of \$4.25 a month each year over those four years. Without the ROE boost, the household bill increase would be more like \$14.70 per month. ComEd's delivery

rates over the past dozen years have been based on an annual formula determining the utility's return, with regulators having no say over it. Return on equity is one of the primary powers the commission has to keep utility rates affordable.

TOLLWAY CHAIR RESIGNS

Governor **JB Pritzker** accepted the resignation of Illinois Tollway Chair **Dorothy Abreu** as she leaves to focus on her health challenges. Vice Chair **Jim Connolly** will assume the responsibilities of board chair until the Governor names a new permanent chair.

IDOI ANNOUNCES 6% + JUMP IN ACA MARKETPLACE OPEN ENROLLMENT

The final record-breaking numbers for the 2023 Open Enrollment Period reveal that nationwide, more than 16.3 million people selected an Affordable Care Act Marketplace health plan. That number includes 3.6 million consumers who are new to the ACA Marketplace, representing a 21% increase in first-time plan selections over last year. In Illinois, 342,995 plans were selected, an enrollment jump of more than 6% compared to last year.

END OF PANDEMIC MEDICAID COVERAGE BRINGS SPECIAL HEALTHCARE.GOV ENROLLMENT PERIOD

In 2022's major year-end federal spending bill, Congress untied Medicaid eligibility from the public health emergency declaration. Since the outset of the pandemic in March 2020, the federal government had offered states extra Medicaid matching funds in exchange for maintaining continuous coverage, meaning enrollees cannot be removed from the program unless they request it, die, or move to a new state. The federal government has been renewing the PHE declaration every three months since that time, but the 2022 federal spending bill terminates the continuous coverage requirement at the end of March 2023. States will then have 12 months to initiate and 14 months to complete the eligibility redeterminations for Medicaid enrollees, which will be a monumental task given the sheer numbers. As a result, the federal Centers for Medicare, and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced recently that it will offer a special enrollment period for people who lose health care coverage due to the end of the continuous eligibility policy. The period will last from March 31, 2023 through July 31, 2024.

IL SUPREME COURT RULES ON BIPA STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

In *Tims v Black Horse Carriers*, the Illinois Supreme Court held that claims brought under the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act are governed by a five-year statute of limitations period. A dispute arose in the lower courts about whether the one-year privacy statute of limitations for "publication of matter violating the right of privacy" applied to BIPA or whether the broader five-year catchall statute of limitations applied. This ruling will bring clarity to pending litigation in state and federal courts brought under the Act that have been in limbo while this question has worked its way through the Illinois judiciary.

AG ISSUES GUIDANCE ON VETERAN LEGAL RIGHTS

Illinois Attorney General **Kwame Raoul** has released updated guidance outlining the rights of Illinois veterans and their families. Those rights include the following:

- Active service members can no longer lose custody of a child based solely on deployments, and courts will no longer consider deployments when determining custody.

- Qualified veterans or surviving spouses may be eligible for a reduction in property taxes based on the equalized assessed value of the primary residence.
- For the 2007 taxable year and beyond a homestead exemption is provided to eligible returning veterans. The exemption is a one-time \$5,000 reduction in the equalized assessed value of the veteran's primary residence.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION PROPOSES STRENGTHENING CONTRACEPTION MANDATE

The Biden administration has moved to reverse a Trump-era policy that made it easier for employers to refuse birth control coverage in company-sponsored health plans. The Trump administration's rollback of the Affordable Care Act's contraceptive mandate allowed organizations to opt out of coverage, citing moral objections in 2018. The new rule would get rid of the moral exemption but keep the religious exemption. If this rule is finalized, individuals who would have been subject to the ACA preventive services requirements, would now have access. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that the proposal could affect over 100 employers and 125,000 workers.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

February 13, 2023

The House and Senate both convened briefly in Springfield last week. Most of the focus has been on drafting and filing legislation. Nearly 2,500 bills were filed by the Friday, February 10 filing deadline in the Senate. About 2,300 bills have been filed in the House, with many more expected before the Friday, February 17 deadline. Each caucus is working on bill review and assigning bills to committee. Please review [ICCTA's Bill List](#) and alert us about any concerns – or of any bills you wish to support.

Both chambers return to Springfield for a Tuesday–Thursday session. Committee work will begin in earnest this week. Gov. JB Pritzker will propose his 5th annual state budget to lawmakers on Wednesday, February 15. This proposal will provide the framework for the budget to be passed by lawmakers in May and is the beginning of a monthslong negotiating process.

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

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

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- February 15: Governor's State of the State / Budget Address
- February 17: Deadline – Introduction of House Bills in the House
- February 28: Consolidated primary election
- March 10: Deadline – Senate bills out of Senate committee / House bills out of House committee
- March 24: Deadline – Third Reading of House bills in the House
- March 31: Deadline – Third Reading of Senate bills in the Senate
- April 4: Consolidated Election (including community college trustee elections)
- April 28: Deadline – House bills out of Senate committee / Senate bills out of House committee
- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

DURKIN, BENNETT HOUSE REPLACEMENTS NAMED

New Republican appointees were named for the vacancies recently left by former House Republican Leader **Jim Durkin**, who resigned in January, and former Rep. **Tom Bennett**, who was appointed to a vacancy in the Illinois Senate.

Lemont mayor **John Egofske** will replace Durkin in the 82nd District. He is a Certified Public Accountant who helped reform municipal finances in Lemont and improve bond ratings. Egofske will continue to serve as mayor of Lemont.

Livingston County board member **Jason Bunting** was sworn in as Bennett's replacement. Bunting works as a family farmer. Until 2023, he served as president of the Livingston County Farm Bureau and is a director for the Illinois Corn Growers' Association.

SENATE ANNOUNCED BIPARTISAN COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Two committees in the Illinois General Assembly will have bipartisan co-chairs. One privilege of being the majority party is chairing all committees. This session, the Senate State Government Committee and the Senate Higher Education Committee will have Republican co-chairs. Joining the Senate Higher Education Committee with Sen. **Michael Halpin** (D-Rock Island) is Sen. **Dale Fowler** (R- Harrisburg). Sen. **Sally Turner** (R-Beason) will be the co-chair of the Senate State Government Committee along with Sen. **Patrick Joyce** (D-Kankakee).

Illinois Senate President **Don Harmon** said that he is glad Illinois Senate Republican Leader **John Curran** reached out with this idea. "At one point in our not-so-distant history this was a common practice in the Senate," Harmon said. "I think we both hope that it will foster bipartisan cooperation on how we can best meet the needs of people all across our great state." Curran said he appreciates Harmon's effort for bipartisanship. "Having members from both parties at the helm of these committees will encourage greater collaboration and dialogue, and lead to better outcomes for the people of Illinois."

MEDICAID WORKING GROUP CREATED

Members of each legislative caucus will participate in a Medicaid Working Group. This year's group will be led by House Majority Leader **Robyn Gabel** and Senator **Ann Gillespie**. Traditionally, the working group reviews all items that may impact the Medicaid program and works to find a bipartisan consensus after meeting with various groups.

GOV. PRITZKER ANNOUNCES \$40 MILLION MEGASITES GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Gov. Pritzker, along with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives, and Intersect Illinois in Pullman, announced \$40 million in Rebuild Illinois capital funds to supercharge the development of megasites – large, developed sites ready for occupancy for manufacturers, distribution centers, industrial centers, and more. The competitive grant opportunity is open to governments, private businesses, or non-profits to support site development to attract large-scale industrial investments in underutilized areas and former industrial sites.

ADVOCACY GROUPS PUSH FOR EXPANSIVE PAID FAMILY, MEDICAL LEAVE

A coalition of advocacy and labor groups is pushing for a state law to give Illinois workers 26 weeks of paid leave if they need to recover from an illness, domestic or sexual violence, or take care of a sick family member or new child. The same groups just celebrated a legislative victory last month with the passage of five days of paid leave – negotiations that took four years but were ultimately agreed to by the state's most influential business groups and even garnered some Republican votes. The coalition's initial proposal – encapsulated in [Senate Bill 1234](#) and [House Bill 1530](#) – would cover all employers in Illinois and all employees who earn at least \$1,600 annually. Paid leave would also apply to contract workers.

BUSINESS GROUP ADVOCATES FOR INCOME TAX ‘SURCHARGE’ AND OTHER MEASURES

A report by the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago says that it could support income tax “surcharges” for people and companies, lasting 10 years, provided the additional revenue is earmarked mostly for public employee pensions. It was a notable message from a group that opposed Gov. Pritzker’s plan for a graduated income tax, with higher rates for higher incomes. Pritzker’s graduated income tax was voted down in a referendum last year.

Among other moves to be considered is a broadening of state sales taxes to cover more services, expanding the income tax to include retirees’ earnings, and forcing members of state retirement systems to pay more for health care.

ICC REPORTS DIVERSE SPENDING BY ILLINOIS UTILITIES

Nearly half of the \$5.1 billion spent by Illinois’ six largest investor-owned utilities went toward diverse enterprises, including minority-owned, women-owned, veteran-owned, and small businesses. The Illinois Commerce Commission’s Office of Diversity and Community Affairs annual report shows that Ameren Illinois, Aqua Illinois, ComEd, Illinois American Water, Nicor Gas, Peoples Gas and Light, and Coke Company/North Shore Gas Company spent more than \$2 billion from these suppliers.

CANNABIS OVERSIGHT OFFICE STUDYING DISCRIMINATION IN LICENSING SYSTEM

The Illinois Cannabis Regulation Oversight Office announced the launch of a year-long review process evaluating the state’s social equity licensing system to determine whether discrimination exists within the state’s cannabis industry. The CROO Disparity Study will end with a report on accessibility in the industry and examine potential changes in cannabis regulation to address any potential discrimination.

LACK OF BROADBAND ACCESS IN ILLINOIS

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s Office of Broadband is concerned about the number of homes that lack broadband access, and the impact that it will have on creation of jobs or remote work/school opportunities. More rural parts of the state have lower rates of internet availability. More than 30% of Menard County’s population is without broadband; about 5,000 households in Sangamon County do not have internet-reaching broadband speed. Last year, broadband spending in Illinois was boosted by federal funds such as the American Recovery Plan Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The state will be making nearly \$400 million in grants available.

PRITZKER SIGNS 15 BILLS FROM PREVIOUS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Gov. Pritzker recently signed 15 bills passed by the legislature during the January lame duck session. There are just four bills still awaiting action by the governor.

The governor approved the following bills:

- [HB 45](#) - Amends the Election Code regarding signature verification and Judicial Subcircuits. Effective immediately.
- [HB 268](#) - Creates the Tourism Preservation and Sustainability District Act. Effective immediately.
- [HB 1064](#) - Abolishes life without parole for people under 21 years of age. Effective January 1, 2024.

- [HB 1563](#) - Amends the CMS Services Law of the Civil Administration Code to remove the preference for location of jobs in Sangamon County. Effective Immediately.
- [HB 1688](#) - Allows cars, vans, and other first division vehicles to operate as school buses under a Secretary of State permit. Effective July 1, 2023.
- [HB 1859](#) - Amends the Cook County Forest Preserve Article of the Illinois Pension Code. Effective June 1, 2023.
- [HB 2369](#) - Amends the Department of Veterans' Affairs Act regarding Veterans Assistance Commissions. Effective immediately.
- [HB 2542](#) - Allows qualifying individuals who previously had a felony conviction to legally change their name. Effective January 1, 2024.
- [HB 2870](#) - Amends the Regional Water Commissions Division of the Illinois Municipal Code. Effective immediately.
- [HB 3878](#) - Makes changes to the Rental Housing Support Program. Effective July 1, 2023.
- [HB 4228](#) - Amends the Decennial Committees on Local Government Efficiency Act. Effective immediately.
- [HB 4245](#) - Amends the Illinois Plumbing License Law to ensure that lawn irrigation and lawn sprinkler system installation is well regulated in perpetuity past the current sunset date of January 1, 2024. Effective immediately.
- [HB 5107](#) - Allows school principals to be eligible for collective bargaining exclusively in Chicago. Effective immediately.
- [HB 5285](#) - Creates transparency in the process of hiring school principals in an effort to ensure schools have the necessary information to hire the most qualified candidate exclusively in Chicago. Effective immediately.
- [HB 5542](#) - Makes various changes regarding the operations of the Illinois Joint Forces Foundation Fund. Effective January 1, 2024.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report February 27, 2023

The Illinois General Assembly adjourned for the week on Thursday, February 23. The Senate will take a week off, but the House is scheduled to return to Springfield on Tuesday, February 28, for three days. The consolidated primary election is on February 28.

Last week, both Chambers considered legislation at the committee level. In total, 85 bills passed out of House and Senate committees combined. The committee deadline for substantive bills is quickly approaching. The House has two weeks of committees left, and the Senate has only one week of committees left prior to the March 10 committee deadline. Given the slower start to the committee process (reminder: over 6,500 bills have been filed this session), and the impending committee deadline, we anticipate there will be deadline extensions.

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

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

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- February 28: Consolidated primary election
- March 10: Deadline – Senate bills out of Senate committee / House bills out of House committee
- March 24: Deadline – Third Reading of House bills in the House
- March 31: Deadline – Third Reading of Senate bills in the Senate
- April 4: Consolidated Election (including community college trustee elections)
- April 28: Deadline – House bills out of Senate committee / Senate bills out of House committee
- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

ILLINOIS EARNS CREDIT UPGRADE FROM S&P

S&P Global Ratings announced a ratings upgrade to A- for Illinois' General Obligation bonds, its third upgrade of Illinois bonds since July 2021 and its seventh in less than two years. The last time Illinois had an A- rating from S&P was before May 2016.

GOVERNOR PRITZKER ANNOUNCES FY24 BUDGET PROPOSAL

Gov. JB Pritzker delivered his fifth **Budget and State of the State Address** to a joint session of the Illinois General Assembly on Wednesday, February 15. He began his speech by highlighting accomplishments from his first term -- that Illinois' \$17 billion bill backlog was eliminated, \$2.3 billion was placed into the Rainy-Day Fund, and the state received six credit rating upgrades. The Governor also boasted that Illinois is using budget

surpluses to chip away at long-term liabilities, including pension debt. He said that this progress enables Illinois to make the long-term investments presented in his proposed Fiscal Year 2024 budget.

In total, Gov. Pritzker proposed FY24 **expenditures** of \$118.9 billion, including \$49.642 billion in General Revenue Funds, which is a \$349 million reduction (0.7% decrease) from FY23. The FY24 budget assumes \$49.944 billion in base General Funds **revenue**, which is a \$1.4 billion (2.8%) decrease from revised FY23 estimates. COVID-related American Rescue Plan Act funds repurposed as general revenue are responsible for much of the decline. Net individual income taxes are projected to rise in FY24 by \$778 million, or about 3.3%. But corporate income taxes are projected to fall by \$175 million, or about 3%. Sales tax revenue will be relatively flat, rising by just \$25 million. The revenue estimate takes into account a possible recession.

- ❖ **Healthcare and Family Services:** The proposed FY24 budget allocates \$37.188 billion, including \$9.070 billion GRF. FY24 Medicaid liability is projected to total \$25.88 billion, with a total program enrollment of more than 3.7 million individuals, an increase of 1.2%. \$760 million will be deposited into the Healthcare Provider Relief Fund for Healthcare/Medicaid to cover the loss of enhanced federal matching dollars under the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage calculation. The proposed budget includes more than \$100 million for Medicaid reimbursement rate increases beginning January 1, 2024. It also includes \$450 million over multiple years for Healthcare Works Illinois, a program to preserve and grow the healthcare workforce. Funds will be used for expansion of the entry pipeline for healthcare workers, continuing education trainings for providers, and other vital investments in staff retention and recruitment. Funding will be available to hospitals, clinics, behavioral health providers, home health workers, and more. Also included is a \$3 million investment towards the Healthcare Workforce Loan Repayment and Scholarship program and \$25 million of continued funding for the Pipeline for the Advancement of Healthcare Workforce Program to train new nurses, medical assistants, lab techs, EMTs and others.
- ❖ **Reproductive Health:** The Governor's proposed FY24 budget establishes a Reproductive Health Public Navigation Hotline to enable patients to call ahead for a risk assessment and find services such as transportation, lodging, and insurance coverage options. The budget allocates \$5 million toward learning collaboratives for worker training to address the shortage of reproductive healthcare workers.
- ❖ **Department of Children and Family Services:** The FY24 budget increases the DCFS budget by \$54.6 million. The proposed budget includes continued rate reform for private sector providers to address staffing shortages of social service workers at DCFS partner agencies.
- ❖ **Home Illinois:** The Governor is proposing \$350 million for the Home Illinois Program, housed at the Department of Human Services, which will target the prevention of homelessness, provide crisis response, expand housing support, and increase job opportunities for the homeless.
- ❖ **Capital Plan:** The proposed FY24 budget includes \$46.5 billion in total capital appropriations. The proposed capital budget includes new capital appropriations of \$4.97 billion, including \$3.3 billion for the Illinois Department of Transportation. Under the Capital Development Board, the Governor proposed capital spending of \$750 million to support healthcare, early childhood education, and innovation projects across the state, including \$200 million for direct capital grants to qualified Illinois hospitals and licensed healthcare providers through HFS and \$400 million to distribute grants to private and not-for-profit colleges and universities.

- ❖ **Smart Start Illinois/Early Childhood Education:** Gov. Pritzker is proposing a multi-year Smart Start Illinois program to transform early childhood education to ensure access to intervention and education needed prior to starting kindergarten. The proposed FY24 budget allocates \$250 million for the first year.
- ❖ **K-12 Funding:** The proposed FY24 budget includes an additional \$571 million for the Illinois State Board of Education, including a \$350 million increase for the Evidence-Based Funding Formula; a \$86.4 million increase for transportation grants and special education grants; and \$70 million for a new three-year pilot program to improve the teacher pipeline.
- ❖ **Higher Education:** The FY24 proposed budget offers a \$219 million increase for higher education, including a \$100 million increase in Monetary Award Program grant funding and a \$100 million increase for public universities and community college operations. With the increased MAP funding, combined with Pell grants, the Governor claims that “virtually everyone at or below the median income level” can go to community college tuition-free. Additional community college investments include \$3.2 million for a new dual credit grant program; \$5.2 million for new noncredit workforce training grants; \$11 million for development of advanced manufacturing, EV technology, and data center workforce training programs; and \$2.75 million to expand English language services.
- ❖ **Public Employee Pensions:** The proposal fully funds the \$9.8 billion contribution to the state’s public pension systems, which face an unfunded liability of just under \$140 billion. Gov. Pritzker also proposed contributing another \$200 million payment towards pensions, utilizing surplus revenue from this fiscal year.
- ❖ **Other Highlights:**
 - \$750,000 to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency in new funding for implementation and administration of the state’s new drug take back program;
 - \$660 million in cost savings beginning in FY24 for the first five years of the new Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug contract for state employee health insurance;
 - The Local Government Distributive Fund is held flat, with no changes;
 - \$143 million increase for Home and Community-Based Services waivers at DHS;
 - \$20 million for the new Illinois Grocery Initiative to address food insecurity;
 - \$50 million to IEPA to address PFAS (“forever chemical”) issues in small and disadvantaged communities;
 - \$17.5 million for two Illinois State Police Cadet Classes;
 - \$56 million to maintain current funding for the Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development grants program for local governments for community park projects;
 - \$5.2 million for motor vehicle and body camera cloud storage;
 - \$30 million for camera grants to local law enforcement;
 - \$40 million to support the Social Equity Cannabis Loan program;
 - \$20 million to support Illinois entities seeking competitive federal awards that align with the state’s economic development plan;
 - Carries forward the \$400 million set aside in FY 23 for efforts to support job creation and business development through the Invest in Illinois Act closing fund;
 - \$10 million for a multi-year initiative to develop and implement a one-stop business portal to assist individuals wishing to create new businesses or relocate a business to Illinois;

- \$20.5 million for addition Electric Vehicle rebates;
- \$10 million in capital funding for new Lead Service Line Replacement Inventory grants; and
- \$2 million increase to the IEPA for air permitting and inspection activities.

Click here to view the [Budget in Brief](#), the [Operating Budget](#), and the [Capital Budget](#).

REP. FRAN HURLEY TO LEAVE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State Rep. **Fran Hurley** (D-Chicago) has been appointed to the Illinois Labor Relations Board. Hurley, who also serves as the House Moderate Caucus Whip, was elected to the General Assembly in 2013. She will resign her House seat to accept the salaried appointment on March 1.

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT RESIGNS AFTER LESS THAN 2 YEARS

Illinois State University will again seek a new president after the abrupt announcement that President **Terri Goss Kinzy** is leaving her position. No reason for Kinzy's departure has been given; in a statement released by the ISU Board of Trustees, she said that she would "pursue other opportunities." Dr. **Aondover Tarhule** has been appointed as interim president until June 30, 2024. He has served as vice president for academic affairs and provost for ISU since 2020, with more than 26 years of experience in higher education.

SAFE-T ACT ARGUMENTS SET FOR MARCH 14

The Illinois Supreme Court is scheduled to hear oral arguments regarding the elimination of cash bail under the SAFE-T Act on March 14.

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT ISSUES BIPA OPINION

The Illinois Supreme Court has issued its opinion in *Cothron v White Castle*, the second case this month concerning the Biometric Information Privacy Act. In this case, White Castle restaurant required employees to scan their fingerprints to access computers and then transmitted the data to a third-party vendor to verify each scan and authorize access. The plaintiff, a store manager, sued on behalf of herself and 9,500 other employees. In a 4-3 opinion, the Supreme Court held that White Castle violated the BIPA each time an employee was required to scan their fingerprint and it was transmitted to a third party. As a result, White Castle could be liable for up to \$17 billion. The Court made it very clear that it has concerns about the penalties under BIPA, but that this is an issue for the legislature.

GOV. PRITZKER JOINS REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM ALLIANCE

Gov. Pritzker has announced that he will join the Reproductive Freedom Alliance, a non-partisan group of state governors focused on identifying best practices for legislative and executive action to protect reproductive rights. RFA members will share strategies on advancing legislative and executive action to protect reproductive rights. The states who have signed on to the Alliance include: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin.

IEMA RENAMED TO INCLUDE HOMELAND SECURITY

Via gubernatorial Executive Order, the official name of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency has been changed to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS). This change will allow IEMA-OHS to better mobilize and coordinate response efforts during future disasters and emergencies. Unless rejected by either the Illinois House or Senate, the change will go into effect 60 days after the executive order's submission. The change would be phased in over the next two years.

ILLINOIS ENGINEERS PROPOSE TRAINING INCENTIVES TO MEET INFRASTRUCTURE DEMAND

Illinois needs to take major steps and implement job training and retention programs to grow and maintain a strong engineering workforce to meet the rising demand and recent funding of infrastructure projects, the American Council of Engineering Companies of Illinois said as it detailed its 2023 legislative agenda. According to a study from the ACEC Research Institute, the state will need to take on an estimated 82,000 additional engineers and other professionals to staff projects funded by the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, as well as ongoing projects under the Rebuild Illinois initiative.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS ESTABLISH CANNABIS WORKING GROUP

Illinois House Democrats have formed a legislative working group to review all cannabis-related legislation in the 103rd General Assembly. Group lead Rep. **La Shawn Ford** (D-Chicago) said that the group's goal will be to facilitate Illinois' equity-based cannabis regulation system. Ford will be joined in the group by Reps. **Marcus Evans** (D-Chicago), **Barbara Hernandez** (D-Aurora), **Bob Rita** (D-Blue Island), **Jennifer Gong Gershowitz** (D-Glenview), **Sonya Harper** (D-Chicago), and **Bob Morgan** (D-Highland Park).

MISSOURI VS. ILLINOIS CANNABIS PROFITS

Missouri's medical dispensaries are converting into recreational dispensaries, and the state anticipates reaching \$1.6 billion in sales. The Show-Me State has the cheapest legal weed in the Midwest, coupled with high accessibility and an assortment of formats and brands. Missouri is hoping to attract those people who may have otherwise gone to Illinois, including people on the Illinois-Missouri border, with competitive prices. Approximately 30% of sales in Illinois come from out-of-state shoppers, but that is expected to decline.

GAMING BOARD APPROVES TEMPORARY CHICAGO CASINO SITE

State gambling regulators have signed off on the initial steps toward the opening of a Chicago casino. The Medinah Temple will serve as the home of a temporary gambling hall that Bally's hopes to open by June. The ultimate plan is for Bally's to open a permanent casino west of the Chicago River on the site of the Chicago Tribune's Freedom Center printing plant by 2026.

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR ANNOUNCES 2023 THEME DAYS

Illinois State Fair officials have announced new theme and discount days for 2023. County Fairs and Horse Racing Day will start it all off on Thursday, August 10, with gates opening at 7 AM. This change will provide a full day of horse racing, county fair celebrations, free entertainment, carnival rides, in addition to the traditional kickoff activities and the annual Twilight Parade.

Here is the complete list of the 2023 Illinois State Fair theme and discount days:

- **Thursday, August 10** County Fairs & Horse Racing Day
- **Friday, August 11** Agriculture Day
- **Saturday, August 12** Kids Day
- **Sunday, August 13** Veterans Day (Free admission for veterans and their families)
- **Monday, August 14** Senior & Scout Day (Free Admission for seniors and scouts)
- **Tuesday, August 15** Twosday (\$2 Admission for seniors and adults)
- **Wednesday, August 16** Governor's Day
- **Thursday, August 17** Republican Day
- **Friday, August 18** First Responders & Healthcare Heroes Day (Free Admission for first responders and healthcare workers w/ID)
- **Saturday, August 19** Park District Conservation Day
- **Sunday, August 20** Family Day

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE

Expectations are high for the new [Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative](#), will redesign the delivery of behavioral health services for Illinois youth. The goal of the Initiative is to transform statewide systems to provide clear, consistent, and comprehensive guidance to families seeking behavioral or mental health services for children and adolescents. A plan for accomplishing the Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative recommendations will be submitted to the Governor in October 2023 to guide ongoing work.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

March 6, 2023

Only the Illinois House of Representatives was in session last week. The Senate remained in district due to the consolidated primary/municipal election on February 28. The House continued holding committee hearings last week, but still did not move a lot of legislation.

Both chambers will convene in Springfield this week to consider a significant number of bills ahead of the deadline to pass legislation out of committee on March 10. While we expect numerous extension letters to be filed in the Senate, House Speaker Welch has said that he does not intend to grant any extension requests. There are also no agreed-bill lists in the House – so it will be a long and very busy week.

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

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

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- March 10: Deadline – Senate bills out of Senate committee / House bills out of House committee
- March 24: Deadline – Third Reading of House bills in the House
- March 31: Deadline – Third Reading of Senate bills in the Senate
- April 3 - 14: SPRING BREAK
- April 4: Consolidated Election (including community college trustee elections)
- April 28: Deadline – House bills out of Senate committee / Senate bills out of House committee
- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

CHICAGO MAYORAL PRIMARY ELECTION RESULTS

Former Chicago Public Schools CEO **Paul Vallas**, who secured 34% of the February 28 primary vote, and Cook County Commissioner **Brandon Johnson**, who received 20%, will now compete for mayor of Chicago in the April 4 consolidated election. Though Vote By Mail ballots postmarked by February 28 and other provisional ballots still need to be fully counted, their momentum paired with concessions from most of the other candidates, including incumbent **Mayor Lori Lightfoot**, solidified a head-to-head matchup between the two in April. By the end of the night, the mayor sat in third place with 17% of the vote. Former Secretary of State **Jesse White** has already endorsed Vallas, and Ald. **Walter Burnett Jr.**, a veteran Black alderman who backed Lightfoot, will also back Vallas.

GOV. PRITZKER JOINS “NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD”

Gov. JB Pritzker is joining Democratic governors, senators “and other political stars” to travel and speak on behalf of President Joe Biden during his expected 2024 reelection campaign. News of the committee is part of the president’s likely reelection bid, which he is expected to announce in April.

NEW TEACHER PIPELINE INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS SHORTAGES

The state’s proposed Teacher Pipeline Grant Program will direct \$70 million per year over the next three years to the 170 school districts with the greatest need to fill teaching positions. The program will allow districts maximum flexibility to use the funds in innovative, creative, and evidenced-based ways, such as offering signing bonuses, housing stipends, down-payment assistance, or loan repayments; paying tuition and fees or providing residencies or apprenticeships; and sustaining current teachers by providing materials, supplies, coaching, and school culture supports. The Illinois State Board of Education will also utilize \$6 million in federal funds to procure a multimedia advertising and marketing firm to develop and implement a statewide teacher recruitment campaign.

PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITIES AND THE CHAN ZUCKERBERG INITIATIVE

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago have been selected by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative to launch the Chan Zuckerberg Biohub Chicago, a new biomedical research hub that will bring together leading scientific and technology institutions to study human tissue with the goal of creating new, groundbreaking therapeutics. Selected through a highly-competitive year-long application process, the Illinois team was chosen out of more than 60 applicants. The application was supported by Gov. Pritzker, who committed \$25 million in capital funds to provide support to CZ Biohub Chicago.

MENDOZA URGES SUPPORT OF FALLEN FIRST RESPONDER FAMILY COMPENSATION BILL

Illinois Comptroller **Susana Mendoza** has announced her support for legislation that would create a continuing line of appropriation to ensure that families of first responders who die while on duty receive timely compensation. The Line of Duty Compensation Act provides benefits to the families of law enforcement, firemen, paramedics, and other first responders when they are killed on duty. Currently, those benefits are contingent upon an annual appropriation, meaning the fund can run dry before the end of a fiscal year. [House Bill 3388](#) (Vella) and [Senate Bill 217](#) (Belt) would ensure that families are compensated in a timely manner by making the line of appropriation ongoing. The legislation would also increase the amount of time that families have to apply for the payments.

MORE THAN \$500,000 AVAILABLE IN CROP BLOCK GRANTS

The Illinois Department of Agriculture has announced that applications are now open for more than \$544,000 in grants to be distributed over the next three years as part of the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program in the Farm Bill. The grants are available to non-profits, local governments, trade associations, and colleges and universities. Eligible projects must pertain to issues including food safety, specialty crop conservation and environmental outcomes, disease and pest control, the development of new specialty crops, etc. Applications are due by end of day on Thursday, March 23.

STATE LAUNCHES PUBLIC WEBSITE FOR AFRICAN DESCENT-CITIZENS REPARATIONS COMMISSION

The Illinois Department of Central Management Services has launched a new public website intended to educate the public about the long-term disinvestment and impacts of slavery in North America and explain the goals of the [African Descent-Citizens Reparations Commission](#). The ADCRC's website explains the goals of the commission: to recommend measures that "ensure equity, equality, and parity for African American descendants of slavery." The commission will be studying longstanding inequities that remain as a result of slavery, developing a vocational center for people of African descent, and creating Illinois Slavery Era Disclosure legislation.

CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR HEALTH INITIATIVE LAUNCHED

The children's behavioral health system in Illinois lacks a single centralized entry-point for parents, making it more difficult for parents to find care for their kids, according to a comprehensive new report. The Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative has sought to develop a collaborative, multiagency plan to improve services for children in need. A pilot program that offered a prototype portal for stakeholders seeking services for the children with the greatest needs saw a 41% success rate in connecting children with necessary services. One of the largest challenges remains a significant workforce shortage.

IDPH BEGINS CAMPAIGN AGAINST VIRAL HEPATITIS

The Illinois Hepatitis Coalition held its first meeting on Tuesday, February 28, bringing together clinicians, researchers, and community stakeholders interested in stopping the spread of viral hepatitis. Funded by a \$1.5 million federal grant, the coalition will develop an equity-driven strategic plan to end the epidemic of Hepatitis B and C.

BUSINESS GROUPS ARGUE BIPA REFORMS NEEDED TO STEM FRIVOLOUS LAWSUITS

Representatives from the manufacturing, health care, hospitality, logistics, and technology sectors held a press conference to highlight the urgent need for reforms to the state's Biometric Information Privacy Act. They are seeking to prevent a new influx of frivolous lawsuits – at least 1,500 – and allow for innovative technologies following recent state Supreme Court decisions that they say have left businesses legally and financially vulnerable. The business groups said that the law, which was passed in 2008, has been expanded by judicial interpretation to allow each instance where an individual's biometric data is used without written consent to be considered a violation of BIPA, punishable by up to \$5,000 per violation. A 2019 Illinois Supreme Court decision found plaintiffs need not demonstrate any personal harm to file a claim.

MEDICAID COVERAGE UPDATE

Anywhere from about 384,000 to 700,000 people in Illinois are expected to lose their Medicaid health coverage this year, as federal protections put in place during the pandemic fade. Though some of those people will gain coverage elsewhere, others will find themselves suddenly uninsured, and unable to pay for doctor visits and medications.

FUNDS FOR LEAD SERVICE LINE INVENTORIES

The Lead Service Line Inventory Grant Program offers grants to local government units, ranging from \$20,000 - \$50,000, to fund the creation of a complete lead service line inventory. The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency expects to award a total of \$5,000,000 with this round and anticipates distributing this amount across 100-250 grant awards. Applications will be accepted through 1 PM on Tuesday, April 25.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

March 27, 2023

Both chambers were very busy in Springfield last week. Friday was the Third Reading deadline in the Illinois House of Representatives, which meant members spent 8-12 hours on the floor each day working to send their bills to the Senate. In addition to floor action, the House considered numerous amendments at the committee level to prepare legislation for final passage. As of Friday, the House passed a total of 443 bills over to the Senate, and the Senate passed 68 bills to the House. This Friday, March 31, is the Senate's Third Reading deadline. Appropriations committees also continue to hear from state agencies regarding their Fiscal Year 2024 budget requests.

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

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

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- March 31: Deadline – Third Reading of Senate bills in the Senate
- April 3 - 14: SPRING BREAK
- April 4: Consolidated Election (including community college trustee elections)
- April 28: Deadline – House bills out of Senate committee / Senate bills out of House committee
- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

IMA BACKS BILLS SUPPORTING HANDS-ON CAREER EDUCATION

The Illinois Manufacturers Association and several state lawmakers are backing three bills this session that they say would help make it easier for students to attract students to professional careers that may not require college degrees and remove barriers to those experiences. [House Bill 3590](#) would ease liability insurance requirements that some community colleges and high schools say are too expensive to provide hands-on experiences. [HB 3307](#) would allow high school students to take two years of career education courses in lieu of the current foreign language requirement. Sen. Don DeWitte (R-St. Charles) and Rep. Suzanne Ness (D-Carpentersville) are sponsoring a pair of twin bills ([Senate Bill 991/HB 3287](#) and [SB 992/HB 3286](#)), both of which they said would support career tech educators who co-work at manufacturing facilities in Illinois.

ILLINOIS DEMOCRATS SPENDING IN LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD RACES

The Illinois Democratic Party is investing about \$300,000 in school and library board elections to combat candidates viewed as extremist conservatives. Historically, voter turnout for school board elections is low, but in recent years, school board meetings and elections across the country have become more contentious over

topics such as COVID-19 mitigation policies, book bans, and diversity, equity and inclusion curriculum. The party is supporting 84 candidates across 17 counties and sending direct mail against 74 candidates whom it calls extremists.

MENTAL HEALTH STRUGGLES DRIVING COLLEGE DROPOUT RATES

A [new Lumina Foundation-Gallup State of Higher Education survey](#) has found that a significant number of college students struggle with their mental health, and a growing share have or consider dropping out. More than 40% of students currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree program had considered dropping out in the past six months, up from 34% in the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic.

GIANNOULIAS FEARS 'CATASTROPHIC' DATA HACK

According to Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, Illinois risks a "catastrophic" security breach of highly confidential personal data on millions of residents unless it soon upgrades outmoded computer systems based on 1980s technology used to store and process Illinoisans' data, including their home addresses, vehicle registrations, Social Security numbers and organ donor information. A report estimates replacing the old systems and training their operators will cost roughly \$200 million.

FEDERAL LABOR LAW BARS SOME BIPA CLAIMS

In a unanimous opinion, the Illinois Supreme Court opined that there are instances where U.S. labor law bars unionized workers from suing their employers for violations of the state's biometric privacy law. In *Walton v. Roosevelt University*, a group of campus security workers sued Roosevelt University in Chicago over the use of fingerprints for timekeeping, claiming the university did not properly seek consent under the Biometric Information Privacy Act. The Court ruled that federal labor law preempts that right for unionized workers because their agreements establish procedures for arbitrators to hear legal disputes. This is the third Supreme Court opinion related to BIPA released this year, and follows a 4-3 opinion issued earlier this month that urged the General Assembly to review the policy behind BIPA.

NEW DEPUTY GOVERNOR FOR PUBLIC SAFETY APPOINTED

Gov. J.B. Pritzker has named Bria Scudder as his new Deputy Governor for Public Safety, Infrastructure, Environment, and Energy Tuesday, filling the role left by outgoing Deputy Gov. Christian Mitchell. Scudder previously worked as first assistant to Mitchell. She currently works as director of state government affairs for pharmaceutical company AbbVie.

SOS AWARDS \$21 MILLION TO COMBAT CARJACKINGS & VEHICLE THEFTS

To combat the surge of carjackings and motor vehicle thefts in Illinois, the Secretary of State's office is awarding grants totaling more than \$21 million to six police organizations. The SOS collects an annual \$1 assessment on automobile insurance policies from the insurance industry to fund grant awards. In addition, the Illinois General Assembly appropriated an additional infusion of \$30 million last year to combat statewide carjacking and motor vehicle theft.

COMED TRIAL CONTINUES

The federal government's case against four former executives and lobbyists for ComEd continued this week and is expected to last two months. The jury heard testimony from State Rep. Bob Rita, an ex-ComEd attorney, and Will Cousineau, a former top staffer to then-House Speaker Michael Madigan. Their testimony revolves around Madigan's level of involvement on the passage of 2016 utility legislation.

ILLINOIS LEADS NATION IN CORN, SOYBEAN PRODUCTION

Illinois leads the nation in corn and soybean production, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agriculture Statistics Service. The Prairie State has remained the consistent leader of soybean production in the country, while having the five highest counties for corn production: McLean, Iroquois, Livingston, LaSalle, and Champaign.

STATE OFFERING BACK TO BUSINESS GRANTS TO SMALL BUSINESSES

A new round of Back-to-Business grants supporting small businesses are now open, according to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. B2B grants are funded by the federal American Rescue Plan Act and support a variety of businesses, including restaurants, hotels, and venues. Applications are now open through April 5 for businesses to apply, and community navigators are available through DCEO. This block of funding provides \$50 million for restaurants, \$75 million for hotels, and \$50 million for arts organizations.

NEARLY \$700 MILLION SPENT ON MOVIE/TV PRODUCTION IN ILLINOIS

More than \$700 million will be spent in Illinois by film and television production companies in 2023, according to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Expenditures have risen from \$560 million in 2019 to more than \$691 million in 2022. In 2022, the film and television industry in Illinois is estimated to have produced \$403 million in wages and 15,400 non-temporary hires.

NEARLY \$40 MILLION TO BE DISPERSED IN TITLE IX HOUSING SUPPORT

The Illinois Housing Development Authority has announced almost \$39 million in grants to support the construction and/or redevelopment of units containing 100 units of affordable housing for the homeless, those struggling with mental illness, and other vulnerable groups.

MO'S LEGAL CANNABIS CUTS INTO IL'S MARKET

Illinois had a three-year head start on legalizing recreational marijuana, but Missouri has surpassed it after just one month. In February 2023, its first month of legal sales, legal marijuana sales in Missouri totaled \$103 million. Illinois had \$120 million in recreational sales alone in February, which outpaced Missouri, but Illinois sales have plateaued somewhat recently. Some cannabis customers say that they prefer buying in Missouri, which offers home delivery, drive-through windows, and deli-style service, in which customers can see and smell the product before they buy it. Missouri has nearly twice as many licensed marijuana stores as Illinois. Illinois products often cost roughly twice as much, often running \$40 or more for an eighth of an ounce of flower. Missouri also taxes retail marijuana sales at a flat 6% while Illinois has a scale that goes up to a hefty 35%.

ICC'S ANNUAL HAZARDOUS MATERIAL REPORT FOUND MINIMAL VIOLATIONS ON ILLINOIS RAILWAYS

The Illinois Commerce Commission has released its annual report on accidents and incidents involving hazardous materials on Illinois railroads. Of the 8,549 rail cars inspected in 2022, the ICC found violations in just 1.3% of all inspections. When these inspections first started in 1981, violations topped 12%.

FLENDER CORPORATION ANNOUNCES MANUFACTURING EXPANSION

Flender Corporation will expand its current manufacturing facility in Elgin, creating 50 new full-time jobs and retaining 140 existing full-time jobs. New investments will enable the company to expand its manufacturing operations – including gear boxes for wind turbines – creating jobs and contributing to the economic development in the region. As part of its expansion, Flender received an Economic Development for a Growing Economy tax credit, which stipulates a goal of making a significant capital investment and creating 50 jobs and retaining 140 jobs.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

April 24, 2023

The Illinois General Assembly spent three days in Springfield last week. Both chambers considered legislation from the house of origin at the committee level, with some bills receiving additional consideration with extended deadlines.

The House and Senate both return to Springfield on Tuesday, April 25, and are scheduled to work through Friday, April 28 – the deadline to pass substantive bills out of committee in the opposite chamber. Appropriations committees and the Medicaid Work Group will continue to work to finalize the Fiscal Year 2024 budget. Four weeks remain in the spring 2023 session. In addition to the budget, legislators are rumored to be putting together omnibus bills for elections, procurement, cannabis, gaming, revenue, and possibly a few others. Adjournment is scheduled for May 19.

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

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

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- April 28: Deadline – House bills out of Senate committee / Senate bills out of House committee
- May 2: Illinois Community College Caucus inaugural reception
- May 3: ICCTA Lobby Day
- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

NEURODIVERSITY RESOLUTION INTRODUCED

At the initiative of ICCTA president Dr. Maureen Dunne, a [resolution promoting neurodiversity in higher education](#) has been introduced by Rep. Terra Costa Howard (D-Lombard). House Resolution 219 has already garnered two chief co-sponsors: Rep. Katie Stuart, chair of the House Higher Education Committee, and Rep. Norrine Hammond, the Republican spokesperson for the House Rules Committee. Trustees and presidents are encouraged to ask their state representatives to sign onto HR 219 as co-sponsors.

STATE BUDGET PRESSURES EMERGE

As state lawmakers begin crafting a state budget in earnest, they are now faced with recent news that could put previously planned spending or additional programs at risk for FY24.

The largest unexpected shortfall comes from the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, which now estimates spending nearly \$1 billion in the upcoming budget year on **state-funded healthcare for noncitizens**. In 2020, Illinois made noncitizens aged 65 and older eligible for Medicaid-type coverage, becoming the first state to do so. This is a cost born entirely by the state because the individuals are not eligible for the federal Medicaid program. At the time, the FY21 cost estimate was \$2 million. The actual expenses, however, have far exceeded that estimate, costing nearly \$188 million between March 2022 and February 2023. Since the program's initial passage, lawmakers have expanded it twice, lowering the age limit to 55 in 2021 and 42 a year later. The expanded program is known as Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults.

For the current fiscal year that concludes June 30, the actuarial firm Milliman estimated that the total program costs would be about \$222 million, but the actual cost for all three age groups was \$410 million from March 2022 through February 2023. All told, the estimated \$990 million price tag for the upcoming year represents a \$768 million increase over the faulty initial estimate. Gov. JB Pritzker's administration has downplayed the \$768 million increase from last year's estimates, but Republicans are calling for the program to be put on hold. Another bill that remains in committee would add 19- to 41-year-olds to those covered under the program. Milliman's estimate projected that expansion would cost \$280 million, but whether it ends up in the final budget remains to be negotiated.

In addition, the Illinois Health and Hospital Association is calling for a **20% increase in hospital Medicaid reimbursement rates**. [Senate Bill 1763](#) would allow every hospital in the state to collect more money for patients on Medicaid. If passed, it would provide the first Medicaid base rate increase for Illinois hospitals in 28 years. The Illinois Primary Health Care Association supports a similar bill, [House Bill 2298](#), that would raise **Medicaid reimbursement rates for services at Federally Qualified Health Centers**. Services would include medical, dental, and behavioral health care. It is estimated to cost about \$50 million each for Illinois and the federal government, but the IPHCA says the rate increase would help its members care for an additional 180,000 patients each year, hire 250 more health care providers, and expand services.

Other spending asks come from providers at community facilities serving **developmentally disabled individuals**; a push to create a **state-based health exchange**; municipalities seeking roughly \$450 million to restore their share of the **Local Government Distributive Fund**; requested changes to **court and local government salaries** (circuit clerks, county clerks and recorders, county treasurers, county assessors, and county auditors); a proposed **permanent \$700 per child tax credit**, which would cost between \$700 and \$800 million per year.

The long list of funding requests comes amid a backdrop of surging state revenues. In early March, the nonpartisan legislative Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability increased its revenue projection for the upcoming fiscal year to about \$465 million beyond what the Governor projected. But March also saw the first year-over-year revenue decline of any month in the current fiscal year, and a more recent report from COGFA projects slow revenue growth over the next three years among increased spending pressures. April is the most important month for revenue projections, as Illinoisans file their taxes and the scope of available funding becomes more clear. COGFA's April revenue update is due in early May.

TWO LEGISLATORS WILL RESIGN FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Sen. Pacione-Zayas Named Deputy Chief of Staff to Chicago Mayor-Elect

Mayor-elect Brandon Johnson has named Rich Guidice as his chief of staff and state Sen. Cristina Pacione-Zayas as deputy chief of staff. Pacione-Zayas, whose 20th state Senate District includes parts of the Bucktown,

Logan Square and Avondale neighborhoods, will resign within the next few weeks, and an appointment to fill the seat will be made by local Democratic Party officials. Rich Guidice currently is executive director of Chicago's Office of Emergency Management and Communications, the organization that oversees the city's biggest events, including Lollapalooza. Guidice has worked directly under three Chicago mayors.

Rep. Robinson Elected Chicago Alderperson

State Rep. Lamont Robinson was elected 4th Ward alderperson after defeating Prentice Butler in the April 4 consolidated election to replace Ald. Sophia King. Robinson is expected to resign his House seat prior to adjournment.

SENATE GOP ADVOCATES FOR BUSINESS-FRIENDLY INITIATIVES

Minority Senate Leader John Curran and fellow Senate Republicans are arguing that the state's fiscal standing should be used to help businesses through legislation being pushed by its caucus and lowering taxes. Ideas include removing the \$100,000 cap on the Net Operating Loss deductions, repeal the franchise tax, reduce the filing fee for limited liability corporations, eliminate the estate tax going forward, and create a tax credit to fund research and development. Senate President Don Harmon released a statement complimenting Leader Curran "on the amicable nature of our ongoing discussions. We've had encouraging talks with our Republican colleagues on how to work together toward shared goals that further the state's economic success and stability. I look forward to reviewing their proposals and seeing where we can find common ground."

PRITZKER PITCHES ILLINOIS BONDS TO WALL STREET

The state of Illinois plans to sell \$2.5 billion in general obligation bonds to cover a variety of spending programs. Gov. Pritzker and several top staff briefed Wall Street investors last week and took wide-ranging questions on state finances. The Governor was asked about the state's pension systems and responded that pension buyouts, consolidations, and increases in pension payments are slowly turning the tide on the traditional sore spot in state government. He also pointed to the increased balance in the state's Rainy Day Fund, especially with progressives pushing for increased spending on social services. Gov. Pritzker demurred criticism of Chicago's crime and fiscal problems and pointed to his single meeting with Mayor-elect Brandon Johnson in the days following the runoff in early April. But he again threw water on one of Johnson's key proposals -- a tax on each financial transaction and market trade. "It's not popular in the legislature. It's not something that would be good or smart for the state, in my view. I know there are differing opinions about this," Gov. Pritzker said. "We're a state that isn't going to change our position on it."

CHICAGO MAYOR-ELECT JOHNSON ADDRESSES JOINT SESSION

In an April 19 speech to a rare joint session of the Illinois House and Senate, Chicago mayor-elect Brandon Johnson urged state lawmakers to revise the state's formula for allocating funding for public school districts, direct more funds to youth employment, and fully fund the Local Government Distributive Fund (the portion of state income tax that goes to municipalities) and other ambitious initiatives that he said would uplift Chicago — and with it, Illinois — during his first visit to Springfield since winning election. Some of the components of Johnson's plan would need approval from state lawmakers. While in Springfield, Johnson attempted to establish a rapport with legislators and lay out his agenda both in private meetings and his floor speech. Johnson will be sworn in on May 15.

ILLINOIS AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS AT RISK BECAUSE OF STATE ERROR

About 27,000 elementary and high school students could lose access to after-school and summer programs in the upcoming fiscal year due to an internal error causing an estimated \$15 million funding gap. The programs, known as 21st Century Community Learning Centers, are federally funded through a program administered by the Illinois State Board of Education that targets students in low-performing and high-poverty schools. An ISBE spokesperson said that the funding gap is the result of a miscalculation made when the agency tried to estimate how much federal money would be available next year. ISBE is asking the federal government for permission to use pandemic relief funds to cover the amount that was over-allocated for next year.

STRIKES SUSPENDED AT THREE UNIVERSITIES

Governors State, Chicago State and Eastern Illinois University faculty have all ended their strikes. Faculty at Governors State University ended a strike on April 17 after being on the picket line for five days. Union members at Chicago State University ended their 10-day strike on April 16; and those at Eastern Illinois University ended their six-day strike on April 20, with a ratification vote set for April 25.

Bargaining is also ongoing between administrators and faculty at Northeastern Illinois University. The faculty union there voted to authorize a strike last week and has also requested mediation. Faculty at University of Illinois at Chicago went on strike for six days in January before the two sides reached an agreement. The union ratified the contract in early February.

SCHOOL-BASED HEALTH SERVICES EXPANSION

The Biden administration has approved a Pritzker administration proposal to expand the Illinois School-Based Health Services program, which will bring in additional federal matching funds to provide covered services for Medicaid-enrolled students across the state, including critical youth mental health services. The approval means that the state will receive federal dollars for students who receive things like behavioral health services, preventive care, physical and occupational therapy, and other services covered by Medicaid. Previously, this reimbursement was limited to students who had an Individualized Education Program. The expansion is expected to bring tens of millions of additional federal Medicaid dollars to schools.

MUNICIPAL LEAGUE MEMBERS SIGN CIVILITY PLEDGE AT SPRING MEETING

The Illinois Municipal League announced a pledge of civility at its recent spring 2023 Board of Directors Meeting, promising to encourage productive dialogue and build trust with the public. "Even in these times of political disagreement, we believe in finding common ground and engaging in civil discussions about community issues that are important to everyone," IML President and River Forest Village President Catherine M. Adduci said in a statement. "The Civility Pledge is a reminder for all municipal officials and constituents to work together in the pursuit of understanding the points of view of others."

\$16 MILLION IN CLIMATE WORKFORCE PRE-APPRENTICESHIP GRANTS ANNOUNCED

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is offering \$16 million across two programs aimed at providing training opportunities for individuals interested in working in clean energy and the trades. DCEO is launching the initiatives with \$10 million for the Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program and \$6 million for the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program as part of the Climate and Equitable Jobs

Act. The pre-apprenticeship program will support 500 to 700 pre-apprentices over the first year to provide students with the necessary certifications and skills to work for clean energy employers in the construction and building trades.

AG RAOUL SUPPORTS FEDERAL RECALL OF EASILY STOLEN VEHICLES

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul and 17 other attorneys general are calling on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to issue a federal recall of certain Hyundai and Kia vehicles that are particularly vulnerable to theft. In a letter to the NHTSA, the attorneys general argue the vehicles manufactured between 2011 and 2022 lack engine immobilizers, which prevent them from being operated without a key. The coalition wrote that Kia and Hyundai have not done enough to address the issue, promising only some vehicles will receive a software update and offering others a free steering wheel lock. In 2022 alone, there were over 7,000 Hyundai and Kia thefts in Chicago, which account for 10% of all registered Kia vehicles and 7% of all registered Hyundai vehicles in the city.

STATE PUBLIC EMPLOYEE LEVELS DROP

Public health workers spent the last three years on the frontlines of the battle against COVID-19, yet the Illinois Department of Public Health saw the total number of paid employees drop by 6.25% last year. Another drop in staffing took place in the Department of Corrections. The prison population decreased 34% since 2005, and employees in those facilities followed suit. Despite the 4% decrease in total employees in 2022, total payroll for the department rose more than \$33.3 million. The rise is driven by contractually obligated raises and overtime.

COVID-19 PPP FRAUD PROBE IN COOK COUNTY

Forty-eight employees of Cook County Clerk of Court Iris Martinez “no longer work” for the office after they were found to have defrauded the federal Paycheck Protection Program, which was enacted to provide forgivable loans to help struggling businesses stay in business in 2020 and 2021 during the first two years of the coronavirus pandemic. An internal investigation at the park district echoes similar accusations against workers at other branches of Cook County government and courts.

LEGIONNAIRE’S DISEASE REPORTED IN THE VETERANS’ HOME AT QUINCY

The Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Department of Veterans’ Affairs have confirmed one case of Legionnaire’s Disease at the Illinois Veterans’ Home at Quincy. Directives governing the home’s clinical and environmental protocols were immediately deployed, including enhanced resident monitoring and testing of all water sources. Currently, this is an isolated case, and out of an abundance of caution, the residents in the building will be monitored closely for at least the next two weeks. The confirmed resident experienced very mild symptoms and is recovering well.

CLEAN HYDROGEN HUB APPLICATION SUBMITTED

The Midwest Alliance for Clean Hydrogen, a coalition based in Illinois, Indiana and Michigan, has applied to the U.S. Department of Energy to obtain up to \$1.25 billion in federal funding for a regional clean hydrogen hub intended to reduce planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions. MachH2 is one of 33 groups encouraged to submit final applications in the competition for six to 10 hydrogen hubs spread across the country.

DEFENSE RESTS IN COMED FOUR TRIAL

Former ComEd CEO Anne Pramaggiore and former ComEd lobbyist John Hooker both took the witness stand in their defense, and onetime City Club President Jay Doherty and retired lobbyist Michael McClain chose not to testify as the defendants accused of conspiring to bribe former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan all rested their case. Closing arguments begin on Monday, April 24. Over the last six weeks, the jury heard from about 50 witnesses, listened to dozens of secret FBI recordings, and read hundreds of emails and text messages.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

May 1, 2023

The Illinois General Assembly spent three days in Springfield last week. Friday's session was cancelled. Both chambers considered legislation from the house of origin at the committee level ahead of the April 28 deadline to pass substantive bills out of committee in the opposite chamber. There will likely be deadline extensions, but regardless, when the legislators return on Tuesday, May 2, the focus will be on passing legislation on the floor and finalizing the Fiscal Year 2024 budget. Three weeks remain until adjournment.

With the list of funding requests growing, Illinois Department of Revenue director David Harris advised lawmakers this week that they should not expect any major late-arriving tax revenue windfalls. "I can say without hesitation that there will not be an April surprise," Harris told the Senate Appropriations Committee. The month of April -- state income tax filing season -- plays a major role in whether the state will meet its current-year revenue estimates and greatly shapes the economic outlook for the year ahead. The Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability's April report is due early next week. Harris expects that Illinois will meet its FY23 estimates but that revenues will come in below last year's record output of \$8 billion.

Gov. JB Pritzker's spending estimate of \$49.9 billion from his budget proposal released in February is about \$465 million below COGFA's most recent estimate released in early March — less than 1% of the total budget. What the revenue estimates end up being will determine how much money is available for a long list of funding requests that include municipalities looking for a roughly \$250 million increase; providers of care for individuals with developmental disabilities asking for \$88 million beyond what the governor proposed; and hospitals seeking a 20% Medicaid rate increase.

Gov. Pritzker was asked last week about how recent budget pressures, such as the unexpected estimate for health care for undocumented immigrants exceeding estimates by \$768 million, would impact the state budget. He responded by reiterating his focus on passing a balanced budget, ensuring credit upgrades continue, and firming the foundation for fiscal stability in Illinois.

Other large policy items continue to be negotiated, including environment proposals, Medicaid changes, cannabis omnibus, election omnibus, a revenue package, a state-based health exchange, a gaming bill, and a procurement package.

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

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

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- May 2: Illinois Community College Caucus inaugural reception
- May 3: ICCTA Lobby Day
- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

ILLINOIS' BILL BACKLOG AT LOWEST LEVEL IN 15 YEARS

Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza reports that the state's accounts payable, essentially its backlog of unpaid bills for day-to-day government operations, was down to \$943 million. That is the first time it has dropped below the \$1 billion mark in 15 years (since August 2008) with the oldest bill in her queue at 16 days.

ISBE RELEASES EARLY CHILDHOOD BLOCK GRANTS TO SUPPORT PRESCHOOL DESERTS

The Illinois State Board of Education is encouraging new and potential childcare providers to apply for the 2024 Early Childhood Block Grant, which aims to expand preschool services for three- and four-year-olds in underserved areas. Part of Gov. Pritzker's Smart Start Illinois plan in the proposed state budget includes a requested \$75 million increase for the program in FY24, which would support an additional 5,000 children.

BIPA IMPACT REPORT

The Chamber of Progress has released a report on the increase of litigation related to the Illinois Biometric Information Privacy Act, which requires entities that collect biometric information to have secure systems and seek written consent, with a minimum fine of \$1,000 per violation. The report found a large increase in BIPA lawsuits following the 2019 Illinois Supreme Court ruling that held that plaintiffs do not need to demonstrate actual harm to recover under BIPA. Of the more than 350 cases filed, only a fraction actually allege harm (those mostly from facial scans or services that allow a customer to "try on" an item), and nearly all cases have been settled, with an average settlement of \$506 per person and millions to plaintiff law firms. Most lawsuits relate to employee-employer disputes on biometric time keeping, and 40% of lawsuits have been filed against Illinois companies.

PRITZKER SIGNS BILL CODIFYING COVID HEALTH CARE REFORMS

With the COVID-19 emergency declaration coming to an end on May 11, Gov. Pritzker signed legislation on April 27 that makes permanent some of the expansions and reforms to health care services authorized in response to the pandemic. [House Bill 559](#) (Morgan / Glowiak Hilton) allows health care workers who received temporary licensure during the pandemic to apply for permanent, full licensure while continuing to practice in Illinois. It also allows pharmacies to continue operating COVID-19 and flu testing and vaccination services and treatment for COVID-19. The law, which is effective immediately, is the first bill to be passed and signed into law from the 103rd General Assembly.

COMED FOUR TRIAL: JURY DELIBERATING; NO VERDICT YET

After more than six weeks of trial and approximately eight hours of closing arguments over two days, jurors began deliberating the fate of four ex-officials at ComEd who were labeled "grand masters of corruption" for

their alleged conspiracy to bribe former Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan. Deliberations began last Tuesday afternoon and continued through Wednesday and Thursday – about 15 hours so far. Jurors will resume their work on Monday, May 1.

COMED SEEKS ANOTHER RATE HIKE

Last week, ComEd filed a request with the Illinois Commerce Commission for a \$247 million rate hike to take effect January 2024. If approved, the average household in ComEd's territory will pay \$3.09 more per month. That would be in addition to the \$1.5 billion rate hike request spread over four years already pending before the ICC. By the end of that period, the average monthly household bill would rise by about \$17. The main driver of the increase is far higher interest rates, which caused the interest on Treasury bonds to rise in 2022. The old formula rate tied ComEd's return on equity — the profit it earns on its investments in the local power grid — to the yield on 30-year Treasury bonds. For most of those years, that interest rate was low. That changed when the Federal Reserve hiked rates rapidly to combat inflation.

JOINT ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEES EXAMINE CARBON CAPTURE TECHNOLOGY

Illinois lawmakers last week reviewed a detailed analysis of carbon capture, utilization, and storage technologies and projects during a four-way joint committee hearing. Carbon capture is a method whereby carbon dioxide, a common greenhouse gas, is placed in long-term storage, usually by injection into wells in geologic formations thousands of feet underground. These wells take advantage of empty “pore space” in subsurface structures. Joint House and Senate committees heard testimony from the Prairie Research Institute at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, as well as various stakeholders interested in CCUS and its potential impacts on the environment and energy systems, including the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center at the Illinois State Water Survey, the Illinois State Geological Survey, the Sierra Club Illinois, several Illinois residents, ADM, and the Illinois Manufacturers Association.

PRI published a report in December 2022 that included several recommendations, including that CCUS could play an important role in helping the state reach the decarbonization goals set out in the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act. It also recommended that CCUS be overseen by an interagency oversight committee, that it be regulated to address any potential community concerns, and that it be implemented to support renewable energy goals as well as drive new economic opportunities. With several planned projects in the state, some lawmakers are looking at how to regulate it to ensure safety for people living near pipelines or sequestration wells.

CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE MOVES FORWARD

Legislation to create the Interagency Children's Behavioral Health Services Act has unanimously passed the House Mental Health and Addiction Committee. A new amendment #2 was filed Friday afternoon. [Senate Bill 724](#) (Feigenholtz/LaPointe) would codify much of the children's behavioral health transformation initiative announced by Gov. Pritzker last spring. The initiative is taking an interagency, data-driven approach to child welfare and has been rolled out since March 2022 by Dr. Dana Weiner. The Initiative's Blueprint was released in February 2023 and represents the first year of work on this issue.

NEARLY 2,700 CANNABIS DISPENSARY LICENSE APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

The state has received 2,693 applications for the next round of 55 social equity cannabis dispensary licenses available in the upcoming license lottery. The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation will conduct the lottery in early- to mid-May. Selected applicants will have 45 days following the lottery to prove they meet the criteria for an eligible social equity applicant. Following that, the department will have 60 calendar days to ensure the 55 applicants meet the criteria for a license.

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT REINFORCES ELECTRONIC SERVICE OF SUMMONS

The Illinois Supreme Court has amended Supreme Court Rule 102, which provides for the electronic service of summons and complaints in civil proceedings in recognition of society's increased use of electronic methods to communicate. The amendments memorialize what has long been allowed under the code of civil procedure to allow for summons to be served via social media direct message, e-mail, or text message by special order of the court, when service by traditional means is impractical.

TWITTER CHANGES IMPACT GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Many Twitter users, including Illinois government officials and agencies, have lost their verified blue check marks. The move from Twitter has prompted fears that Twitter users will have one less tool to distinguish known sources from impersonators or hoaxes. The fear is that bad actors could cause disruptions or even create panic during an emergency, like a tornado, by providing dangerously false information to an unsuspecting public. The Governor's office has stated that state agencies will be adding links to their official social media accounts to their media contact websites so that the public can check to make sure they are viewing the actual official account.

ILLINOIS GAMING BOARD APPROVES NEW PLANS FOR CASINOS IN JOLIET/AURORA

The Illinois Gaming Board considered several regulatory matters during its April 27 meeting, including approval of Penn Entertainment's plans for new Hollywood Casinos in Aurora and Joliet (a significant step in the regulatory process to bring new gaming venues to these host communities). The Gaming Board also adopted a new rule requiring responsible gambling signage at all video gaming locations statewide, granted more than 400 new gaming licenses and related approvals along with renewals of existing licenses, issued a license to sportsbook operator Circa Sports, and adopted a rule clarifying video gaming annual fees.

CHICAGO MAYOR-ELECT NAMES TRANSITION COMMITTEE

Mayor-elect Brandon Johnson has announced his transition committee and subcommittees. Among those named are World Business Chicago president and CEO Michael Fassnacht, Mesirow executive chair Richard Price, and Regional Transportation Authority chair Kirk Dillard. The work of the committee and subcommittees will culminate in a written report issued in the coming weeks to shape and guide the work of the new administration.

KIM FOXX WON'T SEEK THIRD TERM

Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx has announced that she will not seek re-election. Chosen twice by voters to be the county's top prosecutor by wide margins, Foxx also faced near-constant criticism for her office's progressive policy choices and their perceived impact on crime in Chicago.

PRIVATELY BUILT TOLL BRIDGE OPENS IN JOLIET

After spending \$170 million, Illinois' first privately built toll road has opened in Joliet. The 1.5-mile toll bridge is aimed at saving truckers time and reducing congestion around major warehouse and shipping facilities near interstates 80 and 55. The toll bridge is a joint venture between developer CenterPoint Properties and toll road company United Bridge Partners.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

May 8, 2023

As the Illinois General Assembly enters the final weeks of its spring 2023 session, the rush is on, with lawmakers scheduled to adjourn on May 19 for the summer. Last week, the Illinois House spent three days in Springfield, and the Illinois Senate was in session for four days. Both chambers continued to consider legislation at the committee level, continued with working groups to discuss the budget, and began considering legislation from the opposite chamber on the floor. The Senate released an agreed bill list with 107 House bills to expedite final passage of non-controversial legislation. One roll call will be taken on Wednesday for legislation on that list.

Both chambers return to session on Monday, May 8. May 11 is the 3rd Reading deadline for House bills in the Senate, and May 12 is the 3rd Reading deadline for Senate bills in the House. Two weeks remain until adjournment, but a number of major policy items are still taking shape. Some of those initiatives include environment proposals, Medicaid changes, cannabis omnibus, election omnibus, a revenue package, a state-based health exchange, a gaming bill, and a procurement package.

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

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

KEY SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- May 11: Deadline – Third Reading House bills in the Senate
- May 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate bills in the House
- May 19: Adjournment

ILLINOIS BUDGET PRESSURES INTENSIFY

Finalizing the state's Fiscal Year 2024 is getting harder, as a new revenue report released last week shows a drop in revenue. This will likely be taken as a warning signal that the state cannot substantially boost spending beyond current levels – and there are a lot of new asks on the table. The Illinois legislature's fiscal arm, the Commission on Government Forecasting & Accountability, says that revenues from non-federal state sources declined 21.5% in April, compared to the same month a year ago, plummeting by about \$1.9 billion. Leading the drop was a massive \$1.7 billion decline in individual income tax receipts, which declined from around \$5.4 billion in April 2022 to \$3.7 billion this year. April 2023's total \$6.8 billion in state revenue was still the second-largest monthly figure in state history, second only to April 2022. But the latest numbers were enough to induce the commission to lower its expected revenues for FY 2023 by \$728 million, to \$51.2 billion. COGFA did not, however, make significant changes to the FY24 revenue number, and that forecast remains about \$500 million higher than that projected by Gov. JB Pritzker's budget office. COGFA also says that the figures do not represent an economic collapse but instead signal a return to a relatively stable picture now that the impact of

COVID stimulus has passed. Gov. Pritzker has suggested that the new report was not unexpected and validates his policy of using much of the windfall of the past two years for savings and debt relief, not new spending. His office also says that its revenue estimates are still lower than even the commission's revised figures.

Adding to the challenge, Illinois received billions during the pandemic, and much of those federal funds will end after federal and state emergency orders expire on May 11. As a result, many programs funded by federal relief dollars will no longer have a revenue source – and will seek state dollars. The Governor's Office of Management and Budget said that most of the federal aid went toward one-time expenditures, such as paying down debt and adding to the state's rainy day fund.

In the Senate Appropriations Committee meeting last Wednesday, the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services estimated that the FY24 estimated cost to provide healthcare coverage to noncitizens who are otherwise ineligible for Medicaid benefits has been revised upward to \$1.1 billion for the upcoming fiscal year (up from an estimated \$990 million at the end of March). The new estimate is now \$880 million beyond the \$220 million estimate originally included in the Governor's February 2023 budget proposal. HFS also estimated that to include the 19-41 year-old population in the healthcare program for FY24 would cost an additional \$380 million.

Also last week, Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle visited with lawmakers in Springfield to ask for an additional \$1.8 million to help Cook County pay for the healthcare costs of asylum seekers. In addition to those already under its care, Cook County is bracing for an influx of new migrants once the federal rules allowing the United States to turn away asylum seekers end on May 11. Outgoing Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot is also asking the state for more funds to assist with the transportation and housing needs of migrants. The *Chicago Sun-Times* reports that Chicago has a \$700 million budget surplus. Legislators will likely factor that unexpected positive news into their budget allocations for the city.

Advocates also came to Springfield last Wednesday to push for state funding to help build a new St. Anthony's hospital in Little Village. The Chicago City Council approved the move earlier this year, but advocates say they need more funding for the project.

HOUSE HIGHER ED APPROPRIATIONS CHAIR CALLS FOR ADDITIONAL HIGHER ED FUNDING

Gov. Pritzker's proposed FY24 budget includes a 7% increase in overall funding for the state's higher education institutions, but according to Rep. La Shawn Ford (D-Chicago), that may not be enough to handle ballooning expenses.

"Our public universities are critical to equip our young people with the education and tools they need to be competitive in the 21st century. Over the course of hearings with the higher Ed officials it has been abundantly clear that the institutions need to be fully funded so that they can meet the needs of their students. So today I stand here as the Chair of [House] Higher Education Appropriations in support of an increase past the 7 percent that the governor has proposed across the board for all our public universities," Ford said at a May 3 press conference.

Ford was joined by Rep. Carol Ammons (D-Champaign), who represents the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. She serves on the Illinois Board of Higher Education's Commission on Equitable Public University Funding, where she has worked with higher education officials to find a more sustainable funding model. Ammons said that due to declining state funding coupled with inflation and other economic factors,

state funding of higher education is nearly 50% less than it was in 2000. Ford added that some of the financial stress for these institutions has come in part from the increasing cost of doing business overall as well as declining enrollment.

“COMED FOUR” FOUND GUILTY ON ALL COUNTS

Former lobbyist Michael McClain, former ComEd CEO Anne Pramaggiore, retired ComEd vice president John Hooker, and former ComEd lobbyist Jay Doherty have been found guilty of every count of a nine-count indictment. The four were convicted of conspiracy and bribery to influence and reward former House Speaker Michael Madigan by arranging for jobs and contracts for his political allies and workers, and falsifying documents. Much of the case centered on the line between legal lobbying and illegal bribery. Following the verdict, acting U.S. Attorney Morris “Sonny” Pasqual warned those involved in business and politics to seek advice on where the legal lines are because anyone who crosses into bribery “will be on our radar.” Sentencing will occur in January 2024, with the counts ranging from 5 year to 20 years in prison.

The verdict could bolster prosecutors’ case against Madigan, who, in the course of the trial, was revealed as the initial target of the feds’ investigation which opened in late 2014. After the verdict was read, one of the jurors said they came to believe the speaker’s involvement with ComEd “was key.” “He really did cause this all to happen,” she said. “If it wouldn’t have been for him, these people would not have been in the position that they would need to commit crimes in the first place.”

PROPOSED ELECTED CHICAGO SCHOOL BOARD MAP RELEASED

The Senate Democrats have released a proposed map of the 20 new elected districts for the Chicago school board. A map must be adopted by July 1. Chicago is the only school board in the state with an appointed school board. That changes in November 2024, when 10 districts will be elected and the mayor will then appoint 10 members and the president. The entire board will be elected beginning in November 2026.

SPEAKER’S STAFF SEEKS TO UNIONIZE

A group of House Democrat staffers have formed a union and seek to be recognized by the Illinois Labor Relations Board. The Board denied their application in March based on a state law that prohibits various employees of specific entities from unionizing, including the General Assembly. The staffers have asked the House Speaker to voluntarily recognize them, although there is a question whether the law prohibits such action. The staff indicated that they do not intend to strike before the end of session and will continue to seek recognition. According to the statement from the Illinois Legislative Staff Association, which represents employees of the Research and Appropriations staff of the House Speaker’s office, “Many employees struggle to pay their bills, are forced to work overtime hours with little compensation, and work extra jobs to make ends meet. These conditions have led to unsustainable staff turnover and have impeded our ability to serve the people of Illinois. Nearly 70% of staff have signed in support of unionization in order to address these issues.”

NO ILLINOIS COUNTIES SEE ELEVATED COVID-19 CASES WEEK BEFORE EMERGENCY ENDS

All Illinois counties are now rated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as having low community level for COVID-19 risk -- just days before the national and state COVID-19 public health emergencies are set to end. The World Health Organization has also announced that the global health emergency related to COVID-19

has ended. After the national public health emergency ends, the CDC will no longer be tracking or reporting COVID-19 cases at the community level. The Illinois Department of Public Health will continue to report weekly COVID-19 hospital admissions, cases, and deaths, as well as vaccination rates.

STATE-BASED HEALTH INSURANCE EXCHANGE PROPOSED

State Rep. Robyn Gabel (D-Evanston) has filed House Amendment #4 to [House Bill 579](#), which is the Pritzker administration's proposal to authorize the Illinois Department of Insurance to operate a state-based health insurance exchange. Similar health exchanges have been established in 18 other states, and three more states are attempting to pass similar bills this year. The recently filed amendment has not yet been assigned to a House committee. The amendment calls for a state-based exchange using the federal platform in 2025 and a fully operational state-based exchange in 2026. Industry leaders are concerned about the state's capacity to stand up and operate a state-based exchange so quickly.

PRITZKER OFFERS SUPPORT FOR MEDICAID ENROLLEES AS PANDEMIC PROTECTIONS END

As the COVID-19 pandemic protections come to an end, the state of Illinois is taking steps to prevent a Medicaid "coverage cliff" situation where many enrollees would lose health care coverage. During the pandemic, Medicaid enrollees received continuous coverage without the need to re-enroll and go through the redetermination process that evaluates their eligibility for health benefits. Both the federal and state emergency declarations for COVID-19 will end on May 11.

The Illinois HFS has announced that it has automatically renewed coverage for 51% of the 113,600 cases scheduled for renewal this June. Gov. Pritzker says that individuals scheduled for a June renewal date can expect mailed notices begin to arrive in mailboxes this week, informing enrollees of whether they were automatically renewed or if they must submit a renewal form by June 1. Illinois Medicaid enrollment increased from 2.9 million to roughly 3.9 million during the pandemic. HFS director Theresa Eagleson said that the department is working with community-based resources to help ease this transition. In order to protect enrollee's continuous coverage, HFS launched the Ready to Renew outreach campaign in March, including print, digital, and broadcast ads to inform the public about upcoming changes to the program. Medicaid customers who do not respond to notices to renew will lose their benefits a month after their renewal date.

BILL RESTRICTING LIBRARY BOOK BANS HEADS TO GOVERNOR'S DESK

[HB 2789](#), an initiative of Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, would block libraries from receiving state grants if they ban books. It would require that as a condition of qualifying for those grants, libraries adopt either a written policy prohibiting the practice of banning books or the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, which includes a statement that "(m)aterials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval." The bill has passed both chambers and will soon be sent to Gov. Pritzker, who is expected to sign it. The SOS office oversees the Illinois State Library and administers several grant programs for public and school libraries.

ILLINOIS IMMIGRANT TASK FORCE REPORT RELEASED

The Illinois Immigrant Impact Task Force has released a report examining various issues affecting immigrant, refugee, and limited English proficiency communities, sharing recommendations the state can take to improve services to immigrant communities. The Task Force identified 13 issues, ranging from citizenship assistance,

business development, education access, discrimination prevention, immigration detention, COVID-19 relief, language access programs, and more. The report concludes with recommendations for policymakers and community leaders to better support immigrant communities in Illinois. These recommendations include increasing funding for language access services, expanding access to healthcare, and creating new programs to support immigrant entrepreneurs.

ILLINOIS CANNABIS TAXES 2ND HIGHEST IN U.S.

Illinois collects more cannabis tax revenue than any state but California, pulling in \$562 million last year, but it also has the highest tax in the country at nearly 40% with local taxes. Michigan, which has a tax rate of 10%, had overall higher sales than Illinois and took in \$326 million in taxes. A recent report estimates Illinois' combined medical and recreational sales will increase to \$2.3 billion, while Michigan grows to \$2.5 billion.

IPA ELECTRIC PROCUREMENT WEBSITE DEBUTS

The Illinois Power Agency launched a new electricity procurement page to serve as a resource to learn about the IPA's competitive electricity procurement processes, national and statewide electricity prices, electricity supply options for customers in Illinois, and a municipal aggregation program for Illinois municipalities.

DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE ANNOUNCES MENTAL HEALTH PARITY CAMPAIGN

The Illinois Department of Insurance has announced a new ad campaign highlighting mental health parity. The radio, digital, and social media ads aim to raise awareness about mental health parity to help Illinoisans better understand their rights related to health insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorders under the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, which requires health insurers to provide coverage for mental health and substance use disorders that is no more restrictive than coverage for physical health conditions. DOI is responsible for ensuring compliance and imposing fines for violations.

ILLINOIS CAR INSURANCE RATES RISE \$527 MILLION

The five biggest auto insurers in Illinois have raised rates a whopping \$527 million since January. Those insurers are State Farm, Allstate, Progressive, Geico and Country Financial, which together make up 62% of the Illinois market.

FENTANYL DEATHS SURGES 279%

The rate of drug overdose deaths linked to fentanyl has skyrocketed over the last five years, while the rate of deaths by heroin has dropped. The rate of overdose deaths involving fentanyl spiked by 279% between 2016 and 2021 to 21.6 per 100,000, according to a report by the National Center for Health Statistics' National Vital Statistics System. Meanwhile, drugs that used to make up the majority of overdose deaths, heroin and oxycodone, saw declines in their rates of death. The CDC says that the decrease in heroin-related deaths is linked to increased treatments for people who use heroin. In 2021, among all age groups, fentanyl was the drug with the highest overdose death rates with rates highest among those aged 35 to 44.

ASSISTED SUICIDE LEGISLATION PROPOSED

Assisted suicide has been a topic of conversation in the Illinois General Assembly for more than a decade. It appears that there will be a coordinated effort by the advocacy group Compassion & Choices and the American Civil Liberties Union to approve assisted suicide legislation in Illinois prior to adjournment. According to the C&C website regarding the status of end-of-life legislation in Illinois, an amendment to the Illinois Power of Attorney Act was enacted in 2022, allowing for proof of agency (powers of attorney) to be stored on electronic devices.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

May 15, 2023

The Illinois House and Senate were in session last week to pass legislation before 3rd reading deadlines. About 360 bills passed one or both chambers, with just five legislative days remaining on the calendar. Adjournment is still scheduled for May 19 – although that deadline is self-imposed and could be extended.

Both chambers will re-convene today (May 15) through Friday. The budget still looms large as the wild card for whether the Illinois General Assembly will be able to adjourn on time. While budgeteers continue negotiating, neither chamber has released details – such as what revenue number they intend to use or whether the budget will look like Gov. JB Pritzker’s proposal. The negotiated budget likely will not be public until Wednesday or Thursday. The appropriations bill will likely be accompanied by one bill that includes changes necessary for budget implementation (known as the BIMP) and a separate Medicaid omnibus bill.

Complicating finalizing the Fiscal Year 2024 budget is that weaker-than-expected individual income tax receipts have led the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget to revise the General Funds FY 23 revenue forecast downward by \$616 million, or 1.2%. GOMB’s projection for FY 2024 increased slightly – to about \$50.5 billion.

The Governor’s office now projects the current year will end with \$50.7 billion in revenues collected. In his February 2023 budget proposal, Gov. Pritzker had proposed about \$790 million in supplemental spending for the current year that would have brought total spending to \$51.2 billion. The proposed supplemental spending included \$490 million in increased appropriations for state agencies, a \$200 million added pension payment, and \$100 million for additional capital improvements at early childhood centers. The Governor has suggested that current year spending could be brought in line with revenues by slowing the pace of agency spending.

FY24’s anticipated revenue number is not enough to cover the Governor’s proposed budget and a shortfall created by a cost overrun related to a state expansion of healthcare to noncitizens who would otherwise be ineligible for Medicaid. Despite the existing shortfall, the Latino Caucus continues to demand for an expansion of that program to 19-44 year-olds. The Pritzker administration estimates the total cost of the program to be \$1.1 billion in the upcoming fiscal year. That is almost three times the amount spent so far in the current fiscal year, \$110 million more than the March projection, and five times as much as originally projected.

Add that to dozens of budget requests working their way through the legislature, falling revenue estimates, a very large number of new legislators, and the fact that the past two budget cycles were largely resolved with unprecedented federal funding – and it makes the task of passing a balanced budget by the end of next week even more difficult.

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

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

KIM DU BUCLET APPOINTED TO HOUSE

Former State Rep. Kim du Buclet was appointed to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of State Rep. Lamont Robinson, now a member of the Chicago City Council. Du Buclet was a legislator from 2011-13 and has served on the Chicago Metropolitan Water Reclamation District board since 2018.

REP. FLOWERS DROPPED FROM LEADERSHIP POST

House Deputy Majority Leader Mary Flowers (D-Chicago) has been barred from party caucus and leadership meetings. She received a letter from House Speaker Chris Welch last week notifying her that she would be stripped of her leadership position as of May 31, following numerous allegations related to inappropriate conduct. Rep. Flowers is the most senior member of the Illinois General Assembly.

U.S. REP. DANNY DAVIS TO CAMPAIGN FOR RE-ELECTION

U.S. Rep. Danny Davis (D-7th District) will seek another term in Congress. Davis, 82, will make a public announcement about his 2024 bid for a 15th term in the coming weeks. The impending campaign launch and official announcement seems intended to make it clear beyond a doubt that Davis is not going to retire. Davis's announcement raises the question of whether Chicago City Treasurer Melissa Conyears-Ervin will continue exploring a congressional bid, since she had said she would run only if Davis retired.

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OFFICIALLY ENDS

The COVID-19 public health emergency officially came to an end on Thursday, May 11. The end of the state and national public health emergency means that the federal government will begin phasing out providing COVID-19 tests, vaccines, and treatments directly to states. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will also stop tracking and reporting community-level data on COVID-19. The Illinois Department of Public Health will continue to track COVID-19 data through lab data, genomic sequencing, and wastewater surveillance, but hospitals will no longer be required to report the number of patients with COVID-19.

Since March 2020, state and local partners benefitted from a disaster proclamation in the following ways:

- Federal reimbursement for state response costs.
- Illinois residents were able to collect additional Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, more than 1.4 million children received Pandemic EBT (nutrition) support, and Medicaid expansion ensured access to telehealth options and the resources Illinoisans needed to stay healthy.
- Use of State Disaster Relief Fund, covering direct state costs and reimbursements to Illinois National Guard and mutual aid groups.
- Use of the state's mutual aid network (groups of public safety response professionals, including hundreds of health care providers and management professionals, law enforcement officers, fire fighters, emergency medical technicians and disaster response professionals, that are available to deploy to areas of shortage).
- Authorizing the Governor to activate Illinois National Guard reservists, some of whom were doctors and nurses and served on the front lines of the pandemic response.
- Allowing expedited procurement and executive actions as needed to protect public health and safety.

HFS/DHS ABE SYSTEM BREACHED

IDHS and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services have issued an advisory alert about a breach of the State of Illinois Application for Benefits Eligibility system's Manage My Case portal. The ABE system is the eligibility system for state-funded medical benefits programs (Medicaid), the SNAP program, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. The MMC portal within ABE enables clients to see their case history and benefit details, as well as change account and benefit information. On March 13, the departments discovered suspicious user accounts had been created within the ABE system. These suspicious accounts were able to link to existing customer MMC accounts by providing the customer's date of birth and Individual ID or Social Security Number, and then correctly answering several identity-proofing questions. In response to this incident, the departments have deployed new software to stop the creation of more suspicious user accounts and de-linked the suspicious accounts from the customer accounts.

VETERANS' HOME AT CHICAGO RECEIVES FEDERAL CERTIFICATION

After a thorough vetting process, The Veterans' Home at Chicago received notice of its official certification from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The certification followed a recognition survey of the home, which is designed to ensure it meets all standards outlined by the USDVA to qualify as a State Veterans Home. The home was conceptualized to offer residential living for a growing veteran population in Cook County requiring skilled nursing care. With 56% of Illinois veterans residing in Cook County, its location was selected to bring Cook County veterans closer to their families and support network. Chicago became the fifth State Veterans' Home in Illinois, joining Veterans' homes in Anna, LaSalle, Manteno, and Quincy.

ILLINOIS MOVES TOWARD GENDER INCLUSIVITY

Illinois bills that would update existing laws to be more gender inclusive and add protections for LGBTQ marriages are ready for action by Gov. Pritzker, who said he will sign them. One bill would replace certain pronouns with the nouns to which the pronouns refer, such as "minor" instead of "he or she," and "person who gives birth" in place of "mother" in some existing laws concerning children in the state's care. Another bill would require state agencies to track employees who identify as non-binary or gender non-conforming to help achieve workforce diversity, and a third bill would make it easier for LGBTQ couples who resided in other states to marry in Illinois. When the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the federal right to an abortion in June, the ruling included a concurring opinion from Justice Clarence Thomas that suggested the high court should review other precedent-setting rulings, including the 2015 decision legalizing same-sex marriage. The marriage bill is meant to serve as fail-safe in case that decision is reversed.

PRITZKER APPROVES COVID-19 DISABILITY BENEFITS FOR CHICAGO FIRST RESPONDERS

Chicago police officers and fire fighters will retroactively receive COVID-19 disability benefits under new legislation signed by Gov. Pritzker after passing unanimously out of both chambers. House Bill 3162 (Hoffman/Cunningham), the Act-of-Duty Bill, was brought up after multiple first responders were denied COVID-19 disability benefits because they could not establish that they contracted the disease while in the line of duty. Because of this, they received only partial disability benefits. The bill ensures that these individuals receive full disability benefits if they were unable to work due to contracting COVID-19 between March 9, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

SENATORS DETAIL HEALTH CARE ACCESSIBILITY BILLS

Three Illinois Senators highlighted a trio of bills that increase access to medically necessary health care services and equipment, two of which were subsequently passed by the chamber later that day.

Sen. David Koehler (D-Peoria) explained that HB 2443 requires Illinois insurers to cover medically necessary hearing aids for all individuals, not just for children. Koehler said although the state passed a law in 2018 requiring insurers to cover the costs of hearing assistance devices for children, the costs are still burdensome for adults. The Senate passed HB 2443 unanimously. It now goes back to the House for concurrence on a Senate amendment.

Sen. Robert Peters (D-Chicago) is sponsoring HB 2719, which would require hospitals and health providers to screen patients for all available cost-savings programs, financial assistance program, and hospital-provided discounts before going to collection agency or attempting to collect a medical debt. The Senate passed HB 2719 unanimously and now goes back to the House for concurrence.

Sen. Michael Halpin (D-Rock Island) detailed HB 3639, which caps the cost of a twin-pack of Epi-Pens at \$60 regardless of the type of Epi-Pen. Halpin said that while the current cost of one Epi-Pen pack usually is not prohibitive, that is just where the costs begin. The Senate passed HB 3639 unanimously. It will now go to the Governor's desk for full approval.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS CALL FOR ETHICAL REFORMS FOLLOWING COMED TRIAL

Illinois House Republicans are repeating their calls for their Democratic colleagues to pursue more comprehensive ethical reforms following the conviction of four individuals involved in the Commonwealth Edison bribery scandal. The Republicans continue to urge their colleagues to pick up proposals including placing a ban on lawmakers becoming lobbyists, instituting a ban on lawmakers voting on legislation on which they have a conflict of interest, and empowering the Legislative Inspector General with subpoena powers, among other proposals.

State Rep. Maurice West (D-Rockford) has been leading discussions on a package of promised ethics reforms in his capacity as chair of the House Ethics and Elections Committee, although no specifics have been discussed publicly.

FORMER GOV. QUINN CALLS FOR SPECIAL SESSION ON ETHICS

Former Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn is calling for the General Assembly to hold a special session to enact stricter ethics reforms as soon as possible following the conviction last week of four individuals involved in the Commonwealth Edison bribery scandal.

LAWMAKERS LOOK TO END 'COMMON CARRIER' EXEMPTION FOR RIDE-SHARE COMPANIES

Ride-share companies such as Uber and Lyft would be subject to the same level of liability as other forms of public transportation under a measure moving through the General Assembly. HB 2231 would classify ride-shares as "common carriers," meaning the companies can be held liable, rather than just the drivers, for accidents or injuries to passengers. Currently in Illinois, "common carriers" include taxicabs, railways and elevators, among others. The bill is awaiting a concurrence vote in the House.

PROGRESSIVE STATE LAWMAKERS PUSH FOR NEW REVENUE

Unhappy with the direction state budget talks are going, a group of Springfield's leading progressive lawmakers announced a new drive to move two much-discussed ideas that repeatedly have been shot down in the General Assembly: imposing a wealth tax and slashing the fee retailers get for collecting state sales taxes. The group said these initiatives would generate a combined \$700 million a year.

Under one measure, the fee that retailers get to collect sales taxes (now 1.75% of the take) would be capped at a maximum of \$1,000 a year per retailer. The plan drew immediate strong blowback from the Illinois Retail Merchants Association, which said that its members will lose an average of 6 cents per transaction under the current payment scheme. The other bill would require anyone who has assets worth at least \$1 billion to annually pay income taxes on any growth in their value, whether or not the asset is sold.

BILLS SEEK TO REFORM ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING PROCESS

Environmental advocates are pushing a pair of bills they say would help protect communities that have endured decades of disinvestment and negative environmental impacts and deem them "environmental justice communities." The Sierra Club and the Illinois Environmental Council, alongside lawmakers and other advocacy groups, held a press conference to draw attention to legislation they call the "Environmental Justice Act." HB 2520 (Harper)/SB 1823 (Villanueva) would reform the state's industrial permitting process, allowing for more community participation. The process would also allow the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency more oversight, taking into account area pollution and health impacts. HB2520 is still awaiting a third reading vote in the House after not receiving the minimum number of votes (60) in the sponsor's first attempt to pass the bill. SB1823 has only received its first reading.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH AWARENESS

In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, the Illinois Department of Insurance is launching a new ad campaign highlighting mental health parity. The campaign includes radio, digital, and social media ads that aim to raise awareness about mental health parity coverage. As part of the campaign, ads will direct consumers to file a complaint with the Department of Insurance if they believe their health insurer's mental health and substance use disorder coverage has more restrictive requirements than those for physical health coverage. The U.S. Surgeon General also released a strategy and a guide for combatting loneliness and isolation.

DANGERS OF OFFSHORE GAMING HIGHLIGHTED

Illinois and other state regulators have joined to ask U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland to do more to curb offshore gambling. The last major crackdown by the U.S. Department of Justice on illegal offshore operators occurred 12 years ago, when the websites and assets of three major online poker sites were seized. The gaming industry has consistently called out the dangers associated with offshore gambling sites and encouraged the federal government to act.

CANNABIS SALES LOSE THEIR HIGH

Illinois cannabis sales flattened last month for the first time since the state legalized recreational cannabis in 2020, hurt by declining prices and out-of-state competition. April sales totaled \$132 million compared with

\$131.8 million in April 2022. The rate of year-over-year revenue growth in Illinois has been declining steadily as pricing has come under pressure across the industry and the number of new stores has stalled. Pricing declines have occurred across the industry but have fallen much more quickly in other states such as Colorado, California and Michigan, where less-strict regulations allowed more companies into the legal market than in Illinois. Illinois also is feeling the impact of lower purchases from out-of-state residents in Missouri and Michigan. Total out-of-state sales dropped 21% since last year.

CHICAGO STATE OF EMERGENCY DECLARED

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot recently declared a state of emergency in response to the thousands of migrants arriving in the city seeking asylum. The mayor called on the federal government for support and said that only comprehensive immigration reform, including expedited work permits, can alleviate the national crisis. The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced the city and state will receive less than \$9 million from the agency's emergency food and shelter program. The state requested \$100 million.

CUSTOMERS OWE COMED

The Illinois Climate & Equitable Jobs Act requires ComEd to give customers a credit; however, the credit turned out to be overly generous. Now ComEd customers owe the utility \$1.1 billion for credits that it provided them but could not collect when wholesale power prices dropped unexpectedly beginning last year. Beginning in June, ComEd will start recouping the \$1.1 billion in monthly installments over the ensuing 12 months, with added interest of 5%. That means an extra \$98 million per month for ratepayers. The credit held down ComEd electric bills last summer, while downstate Illinoisans saw their bills soar as they bore the full brunt of sky-high power prices for those few months. Adding potential insult to injury, power prices now are low enough that ComEd customers are paying extra to Constellation under the CEJA approach to the nuclear bailout.

COOK COUNTY RESIDENTS' MEDICAL DEBT CANCELED

Nearly \$80 million in medical debt will be forgiven for about 73,000 Cook County residents as part of a new program to alleviate the medical debt burden for some of the area's poorest residents. The program has already erased \$25 million in medical debt for 45,000 residents and will soon abolish \$54 million more for nearly 28,000 residents. Debt is being forgiven through a partnership with national nonprofit RIP Medical Debt, which contacts Cook County hospitals and health systems and negotiates with them to buy patient medical debt. Because the debt is purchased in bundled portfolios for a fraction of its value, one dollar typically abolishes about \$100 of medical debt.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report May 23, 2023

State lawmakers were unable to adjourn the spring 2023 session by the self-imposed deadline of May 19. Neither the House nor the Senate advanced an appropriations vehicle bill to the other chamber, so there was no legal way the two chambers could vote on a budget by last Friday. Both chambers returned home Friday evening so that Democrat leaders can continue to negotiate the final budget package. How the legislative and executive branches wish to manage a healthcare program for undocumented residents continues to be the holdup.

The House and Senate announced that both chambers will return to Springfield later this week: the Senate on Wednesday and Thursday, and the House from Wednesday through Friday. Several substantive bills are still pending on concurrence or 3rd Reading. Late Friday, several large pieces of legislation emerged, including an election omnibus bill, a property tax omnibus bill, a bill extending several sunsets, a cannabis omnibus, a bill offering protections for reproductive health care patients and licensees, a revenue bill, a procurement omnibus bill, Biometric Information Privacy Act reform legislation, a TIF extension bill, and legislation for a state-based insurance exchange, and several others.

Spring session adjournment is typically (pre-COVID) scheduled for May 31, after which a supermajority vote is required to pass legislation containing an immediate effective date. The new fiscal year begins July 1.

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

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

HOUSE ADOPTS ICCTA-INITIATED NEURODIVERSITY RESOLUTION

The Illinois House has adopted [House Resolution 219](#), which “encourages Illinois' institutions of higher education to embrace the neurodiversity paradigm and adopt a statement of inclusivity of neurodivergent individuals that appreciates and embraces the fact that every student is different and should be encouraged to reach their full potential.” HR 219 was inspired by ICCTA's Neurodiversity Inclusion in Higher Education statement and the work of ICCTA president Dr. Maureen Dunne, a globally recognized neurodiversity expert who has worked closely with many public and private organizations to promote authentic inclusion.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE CREDIT PARITY BILL MOVES TO GOVERNOR'S DESK

Under [Senate Bill 2288](#), community college students in Illinois would be assured that class credits related to their chosen major in certain fields of study will be transferable to all public colleges and universities in the state. The bill passed the House unanimously after receiving the same chamber-wide support in the Senate in March. Under current law, four-year colleges and universities in Illinois can decide whether to accept community college course credits as direct equivalents to required classes in a transfer student's declared

major. If the university deems the community college class as not equivalent to the one it offers, the credits earned would only count toward a student's elective hour requirements, and he or she would have to retake a similar class at the university. Upon Gov. JB Pritzker's signature, the new law will go into effect January 1, 2024.

BLUE COLLAR JOBS ACT TAX CREDIT LAUNCHED

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has announced the opening of applications for Blue Collar Jobs Act tax credits. The credits provide \$20 million per year for eligible companies attributable to wages paid to construction workers who work on projects in enterprise zones, a River Edge Redevelopment Zone, for companies designated as a high impact business, or for companies designated with an agreement under the Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) Program. Republican lawmakers in the Illinois General Assembly have frequently asked for the implementation of the BCJA, which was enacted in 2019 as part of Rebuild Illinois.

ETHICS LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

[House Bill 351](#) would bar anyone convicted of a felony, bribery, perjury or misuse of public funds while serving as a public official from ever being elected to a state or local office again. Current law bars anyone convicted of a felony from holding a state office until they have completed their sentence. A provision of the Illinois Municipal Code bars anyone who has ever been convicted of a felony from holding an elected municipal office; but those people are free to run for the General Assembly, governor or any other constitutional office once they have served their sentence. The bill passed the House with a vote of 106-0 and awaits Senate action.

SALARY TRANSPARENCY BILL MOVES FORWARD

The Senate has approved a measure that would require employers with 15 or more employees in the state to list a pay scale and expected benefits for any position listed on a job posting. It would also create a regulatory structure for the Illinois Department of Labor to investigate violations of the proposed law. [House Bill 3129](#) passed the Senate with a 35-19 vote, and the House concurred 75-39. The bill will soon head to the Governor's desk.

PUNITIVE DAMAGES FOR WRONGFUL DEATH CASES

[HB 219](#) would make it easier for Illinois courts to award punitive damages in wrongful death suits. While compensatory damages are meant to make up for the financial burden a family suffers due to the wrongful death of a loved one, punitive damages are intended to deter bad actors. The bill passed both Houses with Democrat support, and Gov. Pritzker is expected to sign it.

NO MORE VENUE SHOPPING FOR CONSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES

Senate President Don Harmon introduced an amendment to [HB 3062](#) last week, which sets courtrooms in Sangamon and Cook counties as the only locations where actions alleging constitutional violation brought on by legislation or executive orders can be heard. Harmon, along with Gov. Pritzker, Attorney General Kwame Raoul, and House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch, have been at the center of recent constitutional challenge lawsuits. The bill passed the Senate by a 37-16 vote and now returns to the House for a concurrence vote.

BILL ALLOWING LAWSUITS AGAINST GUN MANUFACTURERS MOVES FORWARD

The Senate voted 34-22 and the House voted 71-40-1 to approve a measure that will change a section of the state's Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practice to allow the state and consumers to sue gun manufacturers. It will now head to Gov. Pritzker's desk, and he has vowed to sign it.

SOUTH SUBURBAN AIRPORT BILL PASSES BOTH HOUSES

[HB 2531](#) would require the state to establish a process to find partners in the construction of a new airport in Chicago's south suburbs. The measure also adds domestic and global freight cargo transfer development to the stated goals. If signed into law, the state would advertise for proposals from potential development partners. Gov. Pritzker has indicated that he would not support the airport until an airline or development partner commits to the project. HB 2531 passed both chambers and will go to the Governor for consideration.

BEARS LEGISLATION PUNTED TO FALL SESSION

The sponsor of the latest proposal to subsidize the Chicago Bears' move to a new stadium in Arlington Heights said that he will punt the issue until at least the General Assembly fall veto session, giving him more time to refine a measure that has begun to attract some backing but probably not enough to pass. The current proposal would freeze property taxes on the former horse racing track the Bears are eyeing for a stadium, share sales tax and other proceeds with surrounding towns, and impose a \$3 surcharge on Bears' tickets to help recompense Chicago for the loss of revenue from the team no longer playing at Soldier Field.

CANNABIS TRANSPORTERS FILE SUIT

Thirteen transport companies have filed suit in Sangamon County against the Illinois Department of Agriculture and its director, Jerry Costello II, claiming the state is allowing unlicensed operators to transport marijuana. Those targeted in the suit say the dispute is more a matter of transporters having great difficulty getting any business in Illinois because growers can provide their own delivery service.

REP. AMMONS WILL RUN FOR RE-ELECTION

In January, State Rep. Carol Ammons announced that she would challenge appointed State Sen. Paul Faraci for the Democratic nomination for the Illinois Senate's 52nd District seat. However, Ammons has filed paperwork with the Illinois State Board of Elections amending her previous filing declaring her Senate run. The new filing by the Friends of Carol Ammons stated her intent to seek "re-election to the 103rd Illinois House seat that comprises Champaign-Urbana."

BRANDON JOHNSON SWORN IN AS CHICAGO'S 57TH MAYOR

Brandon Johnson said that he would "tell a different story" about "the soul of Chicago" and chart a new path for the future after being sworn in as the 57th mayor of the city last week. In his inaugural speech, Johnson painted a picture of the city that reinvested in disadvantaged communities and united all its neighborhoods and communities to improve the city as a whole. He also addressed the Chicago City Council, which now includes 16 new members, during the ceremonial session.

Among the investments Johnson enumerated in his speech was his promise to reopen shuttered mental health care centers to support individuals dealing with crises that can lead them to situations that involve harm to themselves or others. The mayor directly addressed his plan for public safety, saying he plans to increase investments in communities that would help address the root causes that drive people to commit crime and bolster enforcement. Johnson added that a safe Chicago also includes a safe, reliable public transportation system, which he said should be "a pathway to opportunity to opportunity and enrichment" where parents feel their children are safe to ride. He said a safe transportation network also means one that is safe for cyclists following the high-profile deaths of several cyclists in collisions with vehicles at dangerous intersections.

MAYOR JOHNSON SIGNS FOUR NEW EXECUTIVE ORDERS

❖ EO 2023-15 — Boost Youth Employment

Mayor Johnson's youth employment executive order instructs the Office of Budget and Management to prepare an analysis of all resources in the city's FY2023 budget that are available to fund youth employment and enrichment programs, including any state, county, or federal funds. In addition, the executive order instructs the Deputy Mayor of Education and Health and Human Services to lead all city departments and agencies in identifying additional entry-level jobs that would be suitable for young people. The order instructs the Mayor's Office staff to coordinate year-round youth employment and enrichment activities among sister agencies and city departments, including collaboration with companies and non-profit organizations, for summer internships and community service credit opportunities with Chicago Public Schools and college credit opportunities with the City Colleges of Chicago.

❖ EO 2023-16 — Establish a Deputy Mayor for Immigrant, Migrant, and Refugee Rights

Mayor Johnson's executive order to establish a Deputy Mayor for Immigrant, Migrant, and Refugee Rights makes the new role responsible for the coordination and communication between all applicable city departments and officials related to the city's efforts to support newly arrived and established immigrants, refugees, and migrants. In addition, the order instructs all city department heads to take direction from the Deputy Mayor for Immigrant, Migrant, and Refugee Rights to assist with efforts to address immediate needs and long-standing policy and programmatic goals to ensure the efficacy of Chicago's status as a welcoming and sanctuary city.

❖ EO 2023-17 — Establish a Deputy Mayor for Community Safety

Mayor Johnson's executive order to establish a Deputy Mayor for Community Safety calls on the new office to focus on eradicating the root causes of crime and violence and advance a comprehensive, healing-centered approach to community safety. In addition, the order instructs all city departments to work with the Deputy Mayor for Community Safety to achieve this goal.

❖ EO 2023-18 — Establish a Deputy Mayor for Labor Relations

Mayor Johnson's executive order to establish a Deputy Mayor for Labor Relations will allow coordination to foster, promote, and develop the welfare of the wage earners, job seekers, and retirees of Chicago, in addition to improving working conditions, advancing new job opportunities for employment, and protecting workers' rights.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy End of Session Report June 6, 2023

[*Click HERE to view ICCTA's bill list*](#)

The make-up of the 103rd Illinois General Assembly is the most diverse group of lawmakers in state history. Some notable firsts include an active and much larger Asian-American caucus, the first Muslim members, and a record number of 78 Democratic House members. The 78 House Democrats are led by Illinois' first Black House Speaker, Emanuel "Chris" Welch, and the 40 House Republicans are led by Illinois' first female House Minority Leader, Tony McCombie. With their super-majority-plus numbers, Democrats did not need Republican votes to pass legislation, but McCombie made a public plea to Welch to work with her anyway.

The Senate Democrats, led again by Senate President Don Harmon, enjoyed a 40-19 Democratic majority. As in the House, there was turnover in the Senate's Republican leadership: Sen. John Curran was selected to lead the Republican caucus. At the beginning of the session, Curran signaled a similar tone as McCombie's, saying that democracy is best served when policies are crafted by two parties, rather than unilaterally. To foster bipartisan cooperation, the Senate formed two committees with bipartisan co-chairs – the State Government and Higher Education committees. These early showings of bipartisanship set the tone for the entire session, encouraging greater collaboration and dialogue among senators in the upper chamber.

The 2023 Illinois legislative session met fully in person this year for the first time in three years. A staggering 6,689 bills were filed this session. Of those, 566 bills passed both chambers and will be sent to the Governor for consideration. With more than half of the General Assembly (those new to the chamber since 2020) not having the experience of a "normal" session and budget-making process, and a remarkable number of freshmen lawmakers (11 new senators and 28 new representatives), the session was slow to get started.

Lawmakers were unable to adjourn by their self-imposed deadline of May 19, failing to reach an agreement on the state budget. How the legislative and executive branches wanted to manage a healthcare program for undocumented residents was the main sticking point that held up the final agreement. As leaders continued to negotiate the budget in the final days of session, several large pieces of legislation surfaced in last-minute fashion. These bills included an election omnibus bill, a property tax omnibus bill, a bill extending several sunsets, a cannabis regulatory bill, a bill offering protections for reproductive health care patients and licensees, a revenue bill, a procurement omnibus bill, Biometric Information Privacy Act reform legislation, a TIF extension bill, legislation for a state-based insurance exchange, rate review for health insurance products - and several others.

Despite a desire to include Republican votes on the budget package, Republicans were troubled that the Invest in Illinois Kids Tax Credit was not extended beyond its December 31st, 2023 expiration. (Sen. Elgie Sims stated to reporters after the budget vote that there is time to take up this issue during the fall veto session.) Further, despite attempts to do so, the Illinois General Assembly did not make substantive changes to the State's BIPA nor cannabis laws.

The legislature has 30 days to present a bill to the Governor, and the Governor has 60 days after receiving the bill to sign, veto, or issue an amendatory veto. The General Assembly will not return to Springfield until the fall veto session.

Fall Veto Session has now been scheduled for October 24-26, and November 7-9. These dates will be subject to change or elimination based upon vetoes made by the Governor and any emerging issues that may need to be addressed before the end of the calendar year.

FISCAL YEAR 2024 BUDGET OVERVIEW

FY 24 Budget Bill

Senate Bill 250 (Sims-D/Gordon-Booth-D) contains the state's Fiscal Year 2024 operating budget and capital budgets. The final spending plan looks substantially like the one that Gov. JB Pritzker outlined in his February budget proposal. It contains several new initiatives, including investments in pre-K through 12th grade education, child welfare, combating poverty and homelessness, and increased spending on higher education.

The new budget appropriates more than \$100 billion in All Funds, including \$50.618 billion in General Revenue Funds predicated upon \$50.717 billion in anticipated revenue. The capital budget includes \$4.1 billion in new capital appropriations, including \$2.9 billion to the Illinois Department of Transportation; \$959 million to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (water loan programs); \$222 million to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Open Space Lands Acquisition and Development Grants); and \$50 million to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Main Street, Broadband, and minority-owned small business grants).

In addition to making the full pension payment, the budget will allocate an additional \$200 million towards pension debt, bringing the total pension stabilization investment to \$700 million. Another \$450 million is allocated to pay off the rail-splitter bond debt (tobacco settlement bonds), which is projected to save the state \$60 million in interest and virtually eliminate all short and medium-term debt. And with a \$200,000 million deposit, Illinois' Rainy-Day Fund will surpass \$2 billion for the first time.

Economic Development: The FY24 budget allocates \$400 million to "close" major economic development deals and incentivize businesses to create jobs in Illinois. A one-stop business portal to foster entrepreneurship will receive \$10 million, and \$40 million is appropriated for forgivable loans to launch more social equity cannabis businesses. \$20 million is appropriated for a Fast-Track Workforce Program, and \$10 million will fund minority-owned business retention grants. DCEO also received a \$10 million appropriation for the Clean Energy EV Career and Technical Education Pilot Program and \$2 million to create the Office of Rural Development.

LGDF: While still not fully funded, the FY24 budget assumes transfers into the Local Government Distributive Fund to increase by \$112 million, which represents a 6.47% funding rate for LGDF.

Poverty Initiatives: The FY24 budget includes \$200 million for the new Home Illinois Program -- a homelessness prevention program launched by the Governor. The program will focus on housing, outreach, and other programs, including a new \$20 million Grocery Initiative to expand grocery access to underserved urban neighborhoods and rural towns. Some of the initial funding will be supported by current welcome center programming funds and will support asylum seeking services.

Health Care and Human Services: With the end of the federal Public Health Emergency on April 1, 2023, came an end to enhanced federal match for Illinois' Medicaid program. As a result, the Illinois Department of Health and Family Services budget appropriates \$715.5 million to replace the loss of enhanced match. HFS' total All Funds FY24 appropriation is \$38.2 billion, an All Funds increase of \$770 million over FY23 appropriations.

After 7 weeks of discussions related to current and projected spending for the Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults Program, the final budget appropriates roughly \$550 million for the program to cover the existing population (adults ages 42 and over). The Pritzker administration was also given emergency rulemaking authority to institute cost controls and other measures needed to manage the program, including reducing and managing the program's costs by limiting future enrollment, utilizing managed care models, and maximizing federal funds. Despite intense pressure, the program was not expanded to cover individuals ages 19 to 41.

Illinois' more than 200 hospitals were awarded a 10% across-the-board Medicaid rate increase effective January 1, 2024. The Governor's office claims that federal approval must first be obtained before the rates can take effect or the state will not be reimbursed. In addition to the uniform rate increase, hospitals were also successful in securing additional funding for safety net hospitals (through an increase in the safety net add-on payment, inpatient psych rates, and grant funding), and in harmonizing inpatient psychiatric rates at all hospitals with a new \$624/day floor. A \$3.5 million pool will be created for critical access hospitals, and long-term acute care facilities and psychiatric hospitals will finally receive their Lame Duck payments.

Other healthcare highlights include: state funds for all human services agency budgets increased by nearly \$3 billion over FY23 levels, while federal funds dropped by \$1.6 billion. The Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Initiative ([SB 724](#)) will receive \$22.8 million in start-up costs, and \$92.5 million is included to raise the asset limit for the Aged Blind and Disabled population from \$2,000 to \$17,500. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services will receive a \$75 million increase, which will allow the agency to hire 192 new staff, expand training and protection, increase scholarships for Youth in Care, and improve facilities. Another \$24 million is allocated for rate increases for home workers who assist the elderly and increased outreach to the elderly and for Adult Day Services. Direct Service Providers, who serve individuals with developmental disabilities, will receive a \$2.50/hour increase beginning January 1, 2024.

Education: The FY24 budget allocates \$250 million for Smart Start Illinois, which is the Governor's early childhood plan that aims to eliminate preschool deserts, stabilize the childcare workforce, expand the Early Intervention Program and Home Visiting programs, as well as beginning the overhaul of the childcare payment management system. An additional \$50 million is allocated for early childhood capital improvements.

With respect to K-12 education, an additional \$350 million is allocated for the evidence-based funding formula; \$45 million for the first year of a three-year pilot to fill teacher vacancies; \$3 million to expand access to computer science coursework; and \$1.6 million to launch Dolly Parton's Imagination Library statewide.

For higher education, an additional \$100 million is allocated for MAP grant funding to ensure everyone at or below the median income level can attend community college for free. Public universities are receiving an additional \$80.5 million, while community colleges will receive an additional \$19.4 million over previous year's levels. Pritzker has said these increases effectively make a community college education available tuition- and fee-free for every working-class student in Illinois.

AFSCME Contract Negotiations: It is less clear how the budget will account for potential outcomes of the state's contract negotiations with its largest employee union. The Senate's chief budget negotiator noted that the Governor's administration has, "instructed agencies to plan accordingly," and the General Assembly will "act accordingly" when the new contract is finalized – highlighting the potential for a supplemental budget.

Budget Implementation Bill

[House Bill 3817](#) (Gordon-Booth-D/Sims-D) contains the statutory language necessary to implement the FY24 budget. The legislation authorizes funds sweeps; allows for a transfer limit of 8% for state agencies for FY24; increases election judges' daily compensation reimbursement from the state by \$20; includes coverage in the state employee health insurance program for infertility services and injectable weight loss medication; resets TANF poverty guidelines at 40%; creates the Opioid Remediation Services Capital Investment Grant Program to

make capital improvements to local governments and substance use prevention and treatment providers for opioid abatement; allows the Illinois Department of Insurance to charge an annual compliance fee for police and fire pension funds to allow for audits of those funds; authorizes grants to attract conventions and sporting events; and increases the Illinois Secretary of State's vehicle title fee by \$10 to \$165 and authorizes fund transfers with the SOS to assist with the office's technology modernization, among many, many other things.

Bond Authorization

[HB 3551](#) (Hoffman-D/Harmon-D) creates the Bond Authorization Act of 2023. The legislation specifically authorizes \$700 million in new bond authorizations for capital improvements and infrastructure investments, such as technology transformation, and makes clean up changes to the state's bond acts.

2023 SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Senate Bill 1298 (Gillespie-D/Gabel-D) – **Omnibus Medicaid and Healthcare Package**

- This legislation grants HFS emergency rulemaking for the Healthcare Benefits for Immigrant Adults Program, which provides HFS the ability to manage costs. The bill further authorizes rate increases for various provider types including for: supportive living dementia care rates, inpatient and across-the-board rates for hospitals; substance use disorder treatment; nursing services for medically fragile and technology dependent children; the nursing home support rate; ventilator care in nursing homes; occupational, physical, and speech therapies; ground and air ambulance; adult day services; medically complex and developmentally disabled individuals; long-acting reversible contraceptives, and to support a \$17 an hour wage for homecare workers in the Community Care Program. The rate increases take effect January 1, 2024, with a cost estimate of \$317 million for 6 months of the fiscal year.
- In addition to rate increase, the legislation also creates a new billing code for dementia assessment and care planning. The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation is granted rulemaking authority to implement the limited licensure for international medical graduates. The legislation also includes telehealth services for developmentally disabled individuals and authorizes subclinical professionals at Federally Qualified Health Clinics to be reimbursed for services. Guardrails were added for supportive living program expansion. SB 1298 passed by a vote of 72-31-0 in the House and 44-0-2 in the Senate.

Senate Bill 1561 (Villanueva-D/Cassidy-D) – **Reproductive Health/Patient Provider Protection**

- This is a trailer bill to the Patient Provider and Protection Act and delays the effective date of the Abortion Care Clinical Training Program Act to 2025 to allow the Illinois Department of Public Health more time for implementation. This bill will also mandate insurance coverage of preventative health services and immunizations. Passed both houses.

Senate Bill 1675 (Villanueva-D/Buckner-D) – **Property Tax Sale Reform**

- Among other things, allows local counties and municipalities to intervene after failed delinquent tax sales to save abandoned properties and reduces the monthly interest rate on delinquent taxes for homeowners from 1.5% to .75%; reduces taxpayer-funded payouts to property tax buyers by decreasing the sale in error loopholes and also eliminates tax buyer leverage in Cook County. Passed both houses.

Senate Bill 1963 (Villanueva-D/Tarver-D) – **Omnibus Revenue Package**

- Some of the provisions include:
 - *Ethanol*: new sales tax treatment for mid-range ethanol blends, gasohol, and majority blended ethanol fuel;

- *Aircraft parts*: expands the exemption for materials, parts, equipment, components, and furnishings incorporated into or upon an aircraft;
- *Farm machinery*: provides the exemption for farm machinery and equipment also includes certain electrical power generation equipment;
- *Public utilities*: makes changes concerning municipal tax review of public utilities;
- *Parking tax*: makes changes concerning booking intermediaries;
- *Cigarette tax*: makes changes concerning the distribution on the cigarette tax moneys;
- *Voluntary EMS tax credit*: creates a credit for individuals who serve as volunteer emergency workers.

Passed both houses.

Senate Bill 2123 (Morrison-D/Stuart-D) – **Election Omnibus**

- Among the bill's many changes includes the creation of a ranked-choice voting task force, circulation on newspaper websites, naturalization ceremony registration, allows Chicago senators to file in Cook County, 16-year-olds to pre-register to vote, permanent vote by mail notice changes, enables a candidate email on filing statement, makes November 4, 2024 a holiday for K-12 but not colleges and universities, and delays the Chicago elected school board map by 9 months. Passed both houses.

House Bill 579 (Gabel-D/Gillespie-D) – **State-Based Health Exchange**

- Adopts a state-based insurance marketplace which allows Illinois to set up its own insurance marketplace, similar to Obamacare, to allow the state to have more control over the health insurance market and to protect itself from changes in federal policy. The full transition is expected to take three years (until January 1, 2026) and will be run by the Illinois Department of Insurance.
- The bill caps the assessment on insurers to fund the program at 3.5%. The new Marketplace Director of the Illinois Health Benefits Exchange and the 10 public members must be appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. Authorization was also given to the Department of Insurance to issue rules to require that plans offered on the exchange conform with standardized plan designs. Makes a change concerning the purpose of the assessment. HB 579 passed along party lines, as Republicans had concerns as to why the state should take on the program and whether it can be up-and-running properly under the short time frame of the legislation. Passed both houses.

House Bill 2296 (Gabel-D/Fine-D) – **Health Insurance Rate Review**

- This bill creates a process, beginning in plan year 2026, for the Department of Insurance to approve, modify, or reject rate increases for all individual and small group accident and health insurance policies. The bill also requires that forms and rates filed for large employer group accident and health insurance be automatically deemed approved 90 days after filing. The bill also requires the DOI to annually issue a transparency report beginning in 2026. Passed both houses.

House Bill 2089 (T. Jones-D/Harris-D) – **Insurance Supplier Diversity**

- Requires every insurance company with assets of \$50 million or more to submit a report on its voluntary supplier diversity program, or the company's procurement program if there is no supplier diversity program, to the Department of Insurance. DOI will then publish the results of the report on their website for 5 years. The department will prepare a one-page template for the voluntary supplier diversity report and hold an annual workshop with representatives of the companies and vendors. Passed both houses.

House Bill 2352 (Evans-D/Martwick-D) – **Cook County Tier II Pensions**

- Requires annual earnings, salary, or wages of a Tier 2 recipient in Cook County to track with the Social Security wage base rather than the \$106,800 cap; requires the counties contribution to be paid

through a tax levy and other available funds; and allows veterans to purchase two years of service credit. Passed both houses.

[House Bill 2507](#) (Kifowit-D/Villanueva-D) – **Property Tax Omnibus**

- Property that is used for a petroleum refinery may be the subject of a real property tax assessment settlement agreement among the taxpayer and taxing districts in which the property is situated; veterans no longer have to reapply for the Veterans with Disabilities Homestead exemption; extensions for property tax levies made under the Park District and Municipal Aquarium and Museum Act are special purpose extensions and are not included in the park district's or municipality's aggregate extension; creates an exemption for municipality-built homes; and property that is used to provide services that require a license under the Nursing Home Care Act or the Specialized Mental Health Facilities Act should not be assessed at a higher level than residential property in which they are located. Passed both houses.

[House Bill 2518](#) (Croke-D/D. Turner-D) – **TIF Omnibus**

- Extends various TIF districts in the state of Illinois. The legislation grants extensions to Chicago, Channahon, Peoria, Rock Island, Champaign, Evergreen Park, and Sparta, and also authorizes the Bank of Springfield to petition to create a tourism preservation and sustainability district to fund improvements to the facility. Passed both houses.

[House Bill 2878](#) (Hoffman-D/Castro-D) – **Procurement Omnibus**

- Among other things, allows chief procurement officers to approve the award of a contract on a non-competitive basis to a not-for-profit agency for persons with significant disabilities, creates a bid preference for firms that employ former coal mine employees, amends the Public Private Partnership for Transportation Act to allow the tollway and units of local government to work with PPPs as opposed to just with the Illinois Department of Transportation, makes changes concerning public construction bonding requirements and adds provisions concerning contract diversity reporting. Passed both houses.

[House Bill 3062](#) (Hoffman-D/Harmon-D) – **Venue for Constitutional Challenges**

- Sets courtrooms in Sangamon and Cook Counties as the only locations where lawsuits against the state or any of its officers, employees or agencies alleging constitutional violations brought on by legislation or executive orders can be heard. Passed both houses.

[House Bill 3445](#) (Walsh-D/Stadelman-D) – **Energy Package**

- Expands the eligibility of the “solar on schools” category of the Adjustable Block Program (established by the Future Energy Jobs Act) to include public institutions of higher education; requires the Illinois Power Agency to conduct an energy policy study to look at the potential impacts of utility offshore wind projects, energy storage solutions (like carbon capture), and underground transmission; and requires the Illinois Commerce Commission to host a series of stakeholder workshops to look at the planning and delivery of thermal energy networks. At the request of the Illinois Farm Bureau, the bill includes trailer language regarding commercial wind and solar citing. It also establishes a temporary right of first refusal in the MISO territory (Ameren) for the construction of high-voltage power lines in its service area. The Governor has indicated that he opposes the right of first refusal language and will veto this bill. Passed both houses.

○

[House Bill 3903](#) (Rita-D/Murphy-D) – **Red Light Camera Ethics**

- Prohibits any contractor, or PAC affiliated with the contractor, that provides equipment and services for automated law enforcement and automated speed enforcement systems (i.e red light cameras) to municipalities or counties from making campaign contributions. Passed both houses.

OTHER NOTABLE BILLS PASSED BOTH HOUSES

[House Joint Resolution 23](#) (Stava-Murray-D/Ventura-D) supports IDOT's "**I-55 Managed Lane Project**" which will implement two Express Toll Lanes in each direction between I-294 and I-90/94 and one Express Toll Lane in each direction from I-355 and I-294

[House Bill 219](#) (Hoffman-D/Harmon-D) allows **punitive damages** to be recovered by personal injury cases under the Wrongful Death Act. The legislation excludes state and municipal governments and their employees, as well as legal and medical malpractice.

[Senate Bill 76](#) (Rezin-R/Yednock-D) will end the state's ban on the construction of **new nuclear power plants** which was enacted in 1987. The bill would specifically allow for the construction of small modular nuclear reactors. These reactors operate at a much smaller scale than traditional nuclear reactors and are built in factories and assembled on site. SMRs can be deployed just about anywhere.

[House Bill 2862](#) (Peters-D/Gonzalez-D) creates the **Temp Worker Fairness and Safety Act**, which works to improve safety standards and mandates equal pay for equal work after a 60-day grace period for temp workers. Also creates a whistleblower right of action to allow worker advocates to bring enforcement actions against abusive employers.

[House Bill 2954](#) (Gong-Gershowitz-D/Morrison-D) allows victims of "**doxing**" to pursue civil litigation. "Doxing" occurs when an individual intentionally publishes another person's personal information without their consent with an intent to harm or harass.

[House Bill 3129](#) (Pacione-Zayas-D/Canty-D) requires employers to **list a pay scale** and expected benefits for any position listed on a job posting including on a third-party platform i.e., LinkedIn.

[Senate Bill 2192](#) (Villivalam-D/Davis-D) Requires a state agency to detail in writing **why bids were rejected** if a bidder fails to be awarded a contract after 4 consecutive bids for the same service.

[Senate Bill 1818](#) (Turner-D/Buckner-D) establishes a commission to determine if the state of Illinois should design a **new state flag** and if so, what it should look like and how much it would cost.

[House Bill 3902](#) (Holmes-D/Hernandez-D) allows law enforcement to use **drones** to monitor special events, like parades and festivals, to detect breaches and identify safety issues.

[Senate Bill 1508](#) (Hunter-D/Hernandez-D) creates a joint special instant **scratch-off game** for the benefit of several veterans, social service, and not-for-profit organizations. The bill caps the number of causes funded through the joint scratch off at 10 causes in total at any given time.

[House Bill 559](#) (Morgan-D/Glowiak-Hilton-D) allows **health care workers** who received temporary licensure during the pandemic to apply for permanent, full licensure while continuing to practice in Illinois, allows pharmacies to continue operating COVID-19 and flu testing and vaccination services and treatment for COVID-19. The law was necessitated by the COVID-19 emergency declaration coming to an end on May 11 and was effective immediately upon the Governor's signature. This was the first bill to be passed and signed into law by the 103rd General Assembly.

[Senate Bill 724](#) (Feigenholtz-D/LaPointe-D) creates the **Interagency Children's Behavioral Health Services Act**. A new position, a Children's Behavioral Health Transformation Officer, is created to lead the state's

comprehensive, interagency effort to ensure youth with significant and complex behavioral health needs receive appropriate community and residential services, and the state-supported system is transparent and easier for youth and their families to navigate.

[House Bill 2188](#) (Crespo-D/Joyce-D) transfers the **Medicaid Fraud Unit** from the Illinois State Police to the Illinois Attorney General's Office.

[Senate Bill 1665](#) (Pacione-Zayas-D/Moeller-D) provides any individual receiving **taxpayer-funded subsidies** through a local program meant to address poverty would not have that income counted against them when trying to qualify for medical assistance.

[House Bill 2222](#) (Gong-Gershowitz-D/Gillespie-D) gives the AG notice of **healthcare mergers** in Illinois to protect consumers from higher healthcare costs. The Illinois Hospital Association worked with the Attorney General's Office to bring the Illinois Hospital Association to neutral on the bill.

[House Bill 1540](#) (Morrison-D/Lilly-D) adds **e-cigarettes** to the Indoor Smoking Act, effectively banning the use of e-cigarettes in public indoor spaces.

[House Bill 2431](#) (Kelly-D/Cervantes-D) is an initiative of the Illinois Secretary of State that prohibits **video conferencing or using social media while driving**.

[House Bill 2531](#) (Davis-D/Harris-D) makes the **Peotone Airport** one step closer to reality. The bill requires IDOT to proactively seek out developers with the interest and potential of building out the state's land into a cargo airport within six months of the proposal becoming law.

[House Bill 2443](#) (Chung-D/Koehler-D) requires insurance companies to provide coverage for medically necessary **hearing aids**. Current state law only addresses insurance coverage for hearing aids helping people under 18.

[Senate Bill 1782](#) (Koehler-D/Chung-D) gives financial protection to children whose parents make money posting **videos of their children on social media**. Bill sponsor Sen. Dave Koehler said if the bill is signed into law, Illinois would be the first state in the nation to enact such legislation.

[House Bill 3814](#) (Harper-D/D. Turner-D) requires schools to consider students as in-attendance if the student's absence is to participate in a **FFA or 4-H program** competition or exhibition, supporting student efforts to continue their education outside of the classroom.

[Senate Bill 2288](#) (Castro-D/Costa Howard-D) provides **community college students** in Illinois would be assured that class credits related to their chosen major in certain fields of study will be transferable to all public colleges and universities in the state.

NOTABLE BILLS HELD

[House Bill 3811](#) (Burke-D/Cunningham-D) – **BIPA** – Senate Amendments 2, 3, and 4 would allow individuals to sue companies over improper collection or storage of information such as fingerprints or facial scans and increase the fine for negligent violations from \$1,000 to \$1,500; they also added "electronic signature as an eligible type of violation; and clarified circumstances in which the same action would only count as a single

violation. None of the amendments provided language to clarify a violation only occurs when actual harm is proven. This is in response to the \$17 billion judgement against White Castle, which was cited for each time an employee's biometric data was used as opposed to one collective violation. The Illinois Trial Lawyers Association, the ACLU, and business leaders met for months in an attempt to negotiate BIPA reforms but were unable to reach consensus. The bill failed to advance out of Senate committee.

[House Bill 610](#) (Moylan-D) – **Chicago Bears** – Supports the Chicago Bears plan to relocate to Arlington Heights by creating the Arlington Megaproject Infrastructure Fund, which will help the surrounding communities with building infrastructure to support the move and imposes a \$3 admission tax on tickets to be used to pay off the debt owed to the City of Chicago.

[Senate Bill 1559](#) – (Ford-D) – **Cannabis Regulation** – Increases canopy space for craft growers from 5,000 square feet to 14,000 square feet, allows dispensaries to operate drive-thru windows and offer curbside pick-up services, making sure they prioritize medical patients, allows medical exams to obtain a medical cannabis card to be conducted via telehealth and eliminates the requirement that cannabis be transported in an odor proof cannabis container.

[House Bill 2520](#) (Harper-D) – **Environmental Justice** – Sets requirements for new constructions in areas designated as an environmental justice community, including holding a public hearing before applying for a permit and submitting an EJ assessment with application. The bill also sets the application fee to \$100,000 per permit and allows public participation for permitting transactions and an EJ community. The sponsor attempted to pass this bill on two separate occasions, each time failing to achieve the minimum number of votes (60) to pass a bill.

[Senate Bill 1996](#) – (Buckner-D) – **Gaming** – Makes changes to the Illinois Gambling Act by allowing the issuance of occupational licenses to individuals convicted of felonies IF the applicant does not perform any function involved in gaming by patrons; allows the denial of occupational licenses to any applicant who has a background that poses a threat to the security and integrity of gaming; makes requirements for the consideration of applicants with criminal convictions.

[House Bill 351](#) (Tarver-D) – **Ethics** – Bars anyone convicted of a felony, bribery, perjury, or misuse of public funds while serving as a public official from ever being elected to a state or local office again.

[House Bill 676](#) (Hirschauer-D) – **Firearm Omnibus Package** – Includes several provisions such as creating a Task Force on Firearm Insurance and allowing judges to order law enforcement to seize guns while issuing emergency orders of protection.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy June 12, 2023

[Click HERE to view ICCTA's bill list](#)

The Illinois General Assembly has concluded its 2023 spring session. The Senate adjourned on Friday, May 26, at 1:33 AM, and the House adjourned on Saturday, May 27, at 3:03 AM. Veto session will take place **October 24 - 26 and November 7-9**.

Illinois lawmakers passed 566 bills through both chambers this spring – all but one of them in May. Legislative leaders have 30 days from a bill's passage to send it to the Governor, who then has 60 days to sign or veto it. If the Governor takes no action in that time frame, the bill becomes law automatically. Gov. JB Pritzker signed 90 of those bills into law last Friday, June 9.

On Wednesday, June 7, Gov. Pritzker signed a \$50.6 billion state budget, but he issued an amendatory line item reduction veto to reduce pay raises for lawmakers and other state officials so that the increases comply with state law. Pritzker's amendment provides for 5% raises, the maximum allowed, instead of the 5.5% increase that was included in the budget. Lawmakers will now be making \$89,250 in the budget year that begins July 1, instead of \$89,675. The change reduces the overall budget by less than \$200,000.

HIGHER EDUCATION SEE HISTORIC INCREASES IN FY24 STATE BUDGET

The state's FY24 budget includes a historic appropriation of \$2.53 billion for higher education, an increase of \$279 million (12.4%) compared to the previous fiscal year and the largest increase in over 20 years. Notable highlights include:

- \$100 million increase for the Monetary Award Program
- \$80.5 million (7%) increase for public universities
- \$19.4 million (7%) increase for community colleges
- \$50 million for AIM HIGH program for public university students
- \$10 million for a new grant program to develop programs in Advanced Manufacturing and Electric Vehicle Technologies
- \$12.6 million for student mental health support
- \$1 million for data center curriculum development
- \$3 million for a new grant for institutions that serve large proportions of low-income students
- \$3.15 million for a new community college Dual Credit Grant program
- \$5.15 million for new community college Non-credit Workforce Training Grants
- \$3.8 million increase to Minority Teachers of Illinois Scholarship to support minority teachers-in-training
- \$2.75 million to expand English as a Second Language and for digital instruction in adult education
- \$2.0 million to provide grants and supports to End Student Housing Insecurity
- \$1.5 million for nursing school grants
- \$800,000 for nurse educator fellowships

SECRETARY OF STATE GIANNOULIAS CHARGES COINBASE IN GROUNDBREAKING SUIT

Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias and other state regulators have taken legal action against crypto exchange platform Coinbase Global, Inc. and Coinbase, Inc. for violations of securities laws. This action alleges that Coinbase failed to register its staking offerings with the states' Securities Departments. Registration would have given Illinoisans considering investing their money with Coinbase the opportunity to evaluate the risks involved and compare Coinbase's staking offerings with other investments. The SOS Securities Department determined that Coinbase offered its staking offerings to Illinois residents without registering those securities. Of Coinbase's nearly 3.5 million accounts holding staking offerings, over 140,000 were issued to Illinois investors. Additionally, Coinbase is not a member of the FDIC or SIPC, which means investors are not protected from Coinbase's losses.

ATTORNEYS GENERAL ALLEGE BILLIONS OF ILLEGAL ROBOCALLS

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul is one of 48 U.S. attorneys general signing onto a lawsuit against Voice over Internet Protocol provider Avid Telecom, alleging that they have facilitated more than 7.5 billion illegal automated phone calls (robocalls) to millions of individuals on the national Do Not Call registry. According to a press release from Raoul's office, between December 2018 and January 2023, more than 290 million of those calls were placed to Illinois residents. The lawsuit alleges that Avid Telecom sent or transmitted calls including Social Security Administration scams, Medicare scams, auto warranty scams, Amazon scams, DirecTV scams, credit card interest rate reduction scams, and employment scams.

SUPREME COURT TO HEAR PENSION CONSOLIDATION CASE

The Illinois Supreme Court will hear arguments in the case challenging the consolidation of the state's municipal police and firefighters' pension funds. In February, an appellate court affirmed a May 2022 decision by a Kane County Circuit Court judge holding the law that consolidated the pension funds constitutional. The Appellate Court of Illinois, Second District, said "while plaintiffs have a constitutional right to receive pension benefits ... they have no right to the investments held by the funds; rather, they are entitled only to present or future payments from the funds."

ATTORNEY GENERAL RELEASES REPORT ON SEX ABUSE BY CATHOLIC CLERGY

The Illinois AG office has released a nearly 700-page report detailing decades of child sex abuse by members of the Catholic clergy in Illinois. The report concludes a multi-year investigation into child sex abuse and reveals information of 451 Catholic clerics and religious brothers who abused at least 1,997 children in dioceses across the state. Before the AG's investigation, the Catholic dioceses of Illinois publicly listed only 103 substantiated child sex abusers. The report includes 50 pages of recommended policies that the dioceses could enact to further improve the handling of future allegations of child sex abuse.

SECRETARY APPOINTED TO ILLINOIS DoIT

Gov. Pritzker has named Sanjay Gupta, a national IT leader with private and public sector experience, to serve as the new Secretary of the Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology, pending Senate confirmation. Gupta has served in major roles across the public and private sectors, including running the federal government's pandemic aid portals for small businesses and serving as a board member of the federal Technology Modernization Fund.

COMED SEEKS \$1.5B RATE INCREASE

ComEd is seeking a \$15 billion rate increase, which could lead to Chicago-area households paying an average of \$6.72 more per month next year on their electric bills — and that would only be the first of three straight annual hikes. The utility's four-year, phased-in hike would include similar increases in power delivery rates in 2025 and 2026, followed by a slight reduction in 2027, according to ComEd's filing with the Illinois Commerce Commission. By then, the average monthly residential bill would be about \$17 higher than today's average cost of \$93 — an 18% jump. ComEd says that that is the price of bolstering the region's electric grid in a statewide effort to phase out carbon emissions and protect the system from severe weather damage due to climate change. The ICC has until December to decide whether the rate hikes are justified.

CHICAGO PUBLIC PENSION ISSUES

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson has tasked his finance team and local legislators with finding long-term funding solutions for the city's \$33.7 billion in public pension liabilities. While all four city employee pension funds saw some improvement in their funded ratios in 2021, they remain low with the firefighters' fund just 20.93% funded, the police fund at 23.54%, the municipal fund at 23.41% funded, and the laborers' fund at 45.92%.

MEDICAID PURGE BEGINS

Nationwide more than 600,000 Americans have lost Medicaid coverage since April 1. A vast majority were removed from state rolls for not completing paperwork. States are now combing through rolls and deciding who stays and who goes.

U OF C QUANTUM COMPUTING GRANT

The University of Chicago, along with the University of Tokyo, will receive \$150 million from IBM and Google for quantum computing research in an effort to keep the U.S. and Japan in front of China. Former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, the current U.S. ambassador to Japan, said that the schools' partnership resulted from the University of Tokyo's president mentioning his university's quantum-computing program. Quantum computers are a high-interest research area because they could help solve problems such as modeling how a drug molecule interacts with the body's proteins or how batteries work at an atomic scale.

INSURERS PAYING \$1.1B IN PREMIUM REBATES

COVID-19 led to huge declines in care utilization, and insurers are still feeling the effects as they must dole out more than \$1 billion in premium rebates this fall. Under the medical loss ratio rule in the Affordable Care Act, insurers must spend between 80% and 85% of their premium revenue on providing healthcare, with rebates based on the previous three years of experience. This includes the pandemic, when many providers didn't offer routine care. Insurers will need to pay nearly \$1.1 billion in rebates, which is still less than the \$2 billion paid in 2021 or \$2.5 billion in 2020.

EV MARKET CONTINUES TO MOVE FORWARD

Electric cars and trucks account for 7% of the U.S. light-vehicle market in the first quarter of this year, up from 4.6% in the year-earlier period. The growth is coming as traditional automakers turn on the faucet for new EV

models. Legacy brands and recent industry startups took nearly 40% of new U.S. EV registrations in the first quarter. Brands gaining EV market share include Chevrolet, Ford, Volkswagen, Rivian, Mercedes-Benz and BMW, while brands losing dominance include Tesla, Hyundai, Kia, Audi, Nissan and Polestar. Overall, Tesla still had the bulk of the EV market with 6 of 10 registrations, but that was a drop from its 72% market share a year earlier. J.D. Power said in a report earlier this month that despite growing market share for EVs, many consumers are still wary of the new technology. Barriers include a lack of reliable public charging infrastructure, relatively high purchase prices and confusing new rules for federal EV incentives.

REV ILLINOIS INCENTIVES BRINGS NEW FACILITY TO SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

PVC compound manufacturer Manner Polymers will be bringing a new facility to Southern Illinois that will create more than 60 jobs. The facility, made possible through a Reimagining Energy and Vehicles in Illinois tax credit, will invest \$54 million to build a state-of-the-art facility in Mt. Vernon that will build a wide variety of PVC compounds, including those used in electric vehicles and solar panels. The facility is planning to be operating in the fall of 2025. Illinois was selected as the site for the facility after Manner Polymers considered locations in Arkansas, Missouri, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee, in part thanks to the incentives offered through the REV Illinois program. Manner Polymers is the second recipient of a REV Illinois incentive, following a September 2022 deal with T/CCI Manufacturing, which plans to make upgrades to its Decatur facility to produce compressors for electric vehicles.

GOVERNOR'S HOMETOWN AWARD APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Applications are now open for the Governor's Hometown Awards program. The award recognizes projects that have improved a local community's quality of life. Nominated projects must be sponsored by a unit of local government and include strong volunteer support. Applications are open now through June 16, 2023 for townships, villages, cities, and counties that hosted volunteer projects between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2022.

DOA ANNOUNCES FREE RECYCLING PROGRAM

The Illinois Department of Agriculture encourages farmers and agrichemical facilities to take part in a free agrichemical container recycling program beginning in July.

AG DIRECTOR COSTELLO DELIVERS COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Illinois Department of Agriculture director Jerry Costello, Jr., recently congratulated the 195 graduates of the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences on becoming the next generation of agriculture leaders, encouraging them to continue their pursuit of a career in the state's number one industry. These graduates are part of a record-breaking year for FFA membership in the state of Illinois. Since Gov. Pritzker announced last June that every student taking agriculture classes would have their FFA dues paid, the number of Illinois FFA members jumped from 23,000 to over 41,000 members, making the 2022-2023 school year the largest single-year increase in membership. Additionally, 5,500 students not enrolled in agricultural education courses joined FFA, demonstrating an appreciation of the value of the organization beyond those even taking ag courses. Currently, over 350 schools across Illinois have a FFA chapter.

SUICIDE PREVENTION ONLINE TRAINING RESOURCES PROVIDED FOR VETERANS

The Illinois Governor's Challenge Campaign has announced the launch of online training resources for organizations interested in supporting veterans, service members, and their families with their mental health needs. The online training program covers topics including the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions like post-traumatic stress disorder, depress, anxiety. Participants learn to recognize these symptoms in service members and veterans and provide the appropriate strategies and supports, touching on topics including suicide prevention, crisis intervention, and safe gun storage.

SUPREME COURT CREATES PARENTING COORDINATION PROGRAM

The Illinois Supreme Court has adopted a new rule to establish a statewide framework for using "parenting coordinators" to resolve issues in family law cases. The rule allows local circuits to adopt rules to establish a parenting coordination program. "Parenting coordination" is defined under the Rule as a child-focused alternative dispute resolution process conducted by a licensed mental health or family law professional appointed by the court to assist coparents who are unable or unwilling to cooperate in making parenting decisions or complying with parenting agreements and orders. The parenting coordinator assists parents in working out minor disputes. A parenting coordinator may be authorized by the court to make specific recommendations regarding an existing parenting plan including the time, place, and manner for the pick-up or drop-off of children, the extent and nature of the children's participation in extracurricular activities, including payment of expenses, or any other specific issues assigned to the parenting coordinator by the court or agreed by the parties.

ISP OPENS DECATUR FORENSIC LAB

The Illinois State Police's Decatur Forensic Science Laboratory is officially open. The new lab will focus on high-throughput DNA testing, which comprises about 20% of all ISP forensic cases in the laboratory system, and utilize robotics, which will increase ISP's testing capacity. The ISP forensic science laboratory system has been recognized as one of the largest crime laboratory systems in the world, providing forensic science analytical services to more than 1,200 state, county, and local criminal justice agencies. The average turn-around-time for a DNA case is 3.6 months, but ISP has worked to reduce the turnaround time. In March 2023, 37% of the analyses were completed in 60 days or less. In June 2022, ISP announced that after decades of extensive sexual assault forensic backlogs, the number of pending sexual assault forensic assignments older than 180 days reached zero.

NEW DCEO GRANT PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

DCEO has launched a \$15 million Federal Grant Support Program to assist Illinois-based businesses and organizations seeking federal grants that align with the State's economic development objectives.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

August 9, 2023

Over the past two weeks, Governor J.B. Pritzker signed more than 200 bills and vetoed one ([Senate Bill 1515](#)), citing “irreconcilable drafting errors.” He has now signed more than 500 of the 566 bills lawmakers passed during the spring 2023 legislative session. The Governor still has a little over a week to take action on the remainder of bills on his desk.

2023 FALL VETO SESSION DATES

The Illinois General Assembly’s fall veto session will take place **October 24-26 and November 7-9**.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES TO BE FEATURED AT 2023 ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

The **2023 Illinois State Fair** will run from August 10-20 and feature world-renowned concert artists, food, carnival rides, livestock shows, agricultural exhibits, contests, educational displays, free entertainment, harness racing, auto racing and much more. The Illinois community college system has been invited to host an exhibit table in this year’s Governors Tent on Main Street, highlighting a different college and its outstanding programs each day. The system will also introduce its new statewide branding campaign “**The Community Colleges of Illinois**” and the hashtag **#4everystudent4everycommunity**.

NO APPLICATION FILED TO REOPEN LINCOLN COLLEGE

The potential reopening of Lincoln College is to remain under wraps until all interested parties agree to make a public statement. On July 21, Lincoln Mayor Tracy Welch told a local radio show that Lincoln College, which closed in May 2022, would reopen in some capacity. José Garcia, senior associate director of strategic communications for the Illinois Board of Higher Education, said the organization “has not received an application by an entity seeking to reinitiate postsecondary educational operations at the former Lincoln College site and is unaware of any plans to do so.”

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY REVOKES, THEN REINSTATES SCHOLARSHIPS FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR

Earlier this month, Western Illinois University leaders said that they ended a scholarship for students of color to comply with the U.S. Supreme Court decision striking down race-conscious college admissions policies. Then, just as quickly, the school announced that it was reinstating the scholarship. WIU is just one of many universities trying to make sense of the Court’s ruling and reflects the concern that the decision might impact non-admissions programs, such as recruitment and retention initiatives for Black and brown students. The U.S. Department of Education is expected to issue guidelines for college admissions this fall.

NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLE INNOVATION HUB IN DECATUR

Gov. Pritzker, along with DCEO, TCCI, and Richland Community College, recently held a groundbreaking ceremony for TCCI's new electric vehicle Innovation Hub in Decatur. TCCI is establishing the EV Innovation Hub as part of Illinois' growing EV ecosystem. The project includes the construction of the Climatic Center for Innovation and Research and the EV + Energy Workforce Training Academy, which were supported by \$21.3 million in capital grants from the State of Illinois' Reimagining Energy and Vehicles in Illinois (REV Illinois) incentive package. TCCI's electric compressor line, produced locally in Decatur, will support the growth of electrification and create high-wage, skilled jobs, contributing to the region's economic development. Production is set to begin by the third quarter of 2024.

EARLY INTERVENTION INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

Early Intervention Incentive Payments are designed to recognize and reward early intervention service providers for their commitment to the development and well-being of children. The initiative, administered through the Illinois Department of Human Services, will provide one-time bonus payments to Early Intervention service providers and service coordinators of up to \$1,300 between August and October of 2023. It offers a financial incentive to qualified providers who have dedicated themselves to providing quality services. Early Intervention Providers, Associate Providers, Service Coordinators, and Interpreters who are credentialed, enrolled, and are carrying a caseload as of June 30, 2023, will have eligibility determined by their credentialed enrollment and billing status. There is no need to apply. Early Intervention Incentive Payments are funded through American Rescue Plan Act dollars and are intended to recognize the difficulties providers faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and encourage staff retention.

2024 ELECTION NEWS

U.S. Rep. **Bill Foster** (D) will face a primary from **Qasim Rashid**, an attorney who moved to Naperville from Virginia, where he ran unsuccessfully for Congress in 2020 and the Virginia Senate in 2019. **Susan Altman** (R) of Geneva will challenge the winner for the 11th District seat.

Senator **Patricia Van Pelt** (D-Chicago) has retired from the 5th Senate District after not participating in the spring session. She had served in the Senate since 2013. State Rep. **Lakesia Collins** (9th) and State Rep. **Jawaharial "Omar" Williams** (10th) are both vying for the appointment.

Senator **Tom Bennett** (R-Gibson City) announced his plans to retire at the completion of his current term representing the 53rd Senate District. Bennett served in the Illinois House of Representatives representing the 106th District from 2015 until 2023, when he was appointed to the State Senate on behalf of the 53rd District of Illinois. Sen. Bennett is a former Parkland College trustee and ICCTA president.

Rep. **Mike Marron** (R-Fithian) announced he will not seek re-election next year, putting one of the most vulnerable downstate GOP seats fully in play in 2024. Marron has served the 104th District since his appointment to the seat in September 2018.

Graciela Guzman officially filed her paperwork to run for the 20th District Senate seat now held by **Natalie Toro** (D) after **Dr. Cristina Pacione-Zayas** stepped down to work for Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson.

TRIAL BEGINS FOR FORMER HOUSE CHIEF OF STAFF

The federal trial of **Tim Mapes**, former chief of staff to former Speaker **Michael Madigan**, began Monday, August 7. Mapes was charged with perjury related to testimony given before a federal grand jury.

GOV. PRITZKER, AFSCME COUNCIL 31 ANNOUNCE CONTRACT RATIFICATION

The Pritzker administration and AFSCME Council 31, the largest union of Illinois state employees, announced the ratification of a new contract after membership voted overwhelmingly in favor. The estimated impact of contract ratification stipends and cost-of-living adjustments over four years is about \$625 million — including \$204 million for the first year. The agreement was tentatively reached by negotiators in the early morning hours of July 1. The four-year agreement is now in effect. The agreement provides for a 4.0% pay increase retroactive to July 1. In all, base wages will rise 17.95% over four years. Other provisions include expanded parental leave to 12 weeks, new joint efforts to improve workplace safety, and a number of significant actions to expedite the filling of vacancies and improve strategies to recruit, hire, and retain workers.

FEDERAL JUDGE REJECTS GOP LAWSUIT TO BLOCK MAIL-IN BALLOTS RECEIVED AFTER ELECTION DAY

A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit brought by U.S. Rep. Mike Bost (R-Murphysboro) and two GOP officials that sought to block the state from counting mail-in ballots cast on or before Election Day but received by election authorities up to two weeks afterward. U.S. District Judge John Kness ruled that the plaintiffs lacked standing to sue the Illinois State Board of Elections over an Illinois law allowing mail-in ballots to be counted in the 14 days after Election Day as long as they were postmarked or certified on or before that day. In addition to rejecting the three Republicans' standing to file suit, Kness explicitly ruled that Illinois' 2015 law complied with the U.S. Constitution as well as federal election law.

ILLINOIS OFFICIALS EXPAND AIR QUALITY MESSAGING

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Department of Public Health have established new state-specific guidelines for issuing air quality messages to the public. The Illinois EPA is incorporating all 14 sectors where air quality is forecasted in Illinois into the Air Pollution Action Day program, expanding the existing program beyond the Chicago Metropolitan Area (Cook and surrounding counties). These air quality messages are a call to action for residents to protect their health and for residents and businesses to reduce local contribution to air pollution. The Illinois EPA issues daily air quality forecasts, based on the Air Quality Index, for 14 sectors in Illinois and posts the information at www.airnow.gov. The AQI is a color-coded system that classifies air quality from Good (Green) to Hazardous (Maroon).

TAX CREDIT FOR HYDROGEN USERS

Gov. Pritzker has signed [House Bill 2204](#), establishing a tax credit of \$10 million per year in 2026 and 2027 for users of clean hydrogen. At the conclusion of the tax credit, the Illinois EPA will run a comprehensive study to evaluate both the emissions impact of the tax credit and the national landscape to recommend additional policy measures to ensure Illinois remains competitive in the clean hydrogen economy and meets the clean energy goals outlined in the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act.

SOS INTRODUCES THE ‘SKIP-THE-LINE’ PROGRAM

Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias has announced the creation of a “Skip-the-Line” program intended to improve customer service and wait times at state SOS facilities. The program is currently scheduled to launch statewide September 1, 2023. The Skip-The-Line Program will include the following:

- Simplified Online Services — Customers are encouraged to take advantage of online services at ilsos.gov, including renewing their driver’s license, ID card and license plate sticker.
- Appointment Scheduling — Customers will be required to make appointments for in-person visits at 44 of the busiest DMVs, including all Chicago and suburban locations and some central and downstate DMVs for those seeking REAL ID, driver’s license and ID card services, and in-car driving tests.
- New Extended Hours of Operation — All DMVs will extend hours of operation, with 16 facilities open six days a week – Monday through Saturday.
 - All DMVs will be open from Tues-Sat to Mon-Fri, 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
 - 16 DMVs will also be open on Saturdays, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

THOUSANDS OF ILLINOIS RESIDENTS KICKED OFF MEDICAID PLANS

More than 47,000 Illinois residents have been kicked off their Medicaid insurance plans as of August 1 – nearly a quarter of the population that was up for renewal starting May 1. According to data from the Illinois Department of Human Services, most of them were dropped because they did not submit their eligibility information on time. The state had begun asking residents to prove their eligibility on June 1, the first time since the federal government suspended that requirement in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNIONS SIGN NO-STRIKE DEAL FOR 2024 DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION IN CHICAGO

Major Chicago unions have signed a “labor peace agreement” at McCormick Place, promising not to strike during the Democratic National Convention next year in Chicago. The pact covers the United Center, where President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris are expected to be nominated for a second term, and the McCormick Place complex. What is new is that for the first time the no-strike deal will also apply to union workers at the official convention hotels.

3RD MANUFACTURING EXPANSION SPURRED BY NEW TAX CREDIT

At a groundbreaking ceremony at a Prysmian Group manufacturing plant in Du Quoin, the Pritzker administration announced the signing of the state’s third contract under a tax incentive program for renewable industries that initially became law in 2021. Prysmian, which Pritzker described as “the largest cable manufacturer in the world,” produces cables and other products used in energy storage and distribution, renewable energy and electric vehicle charging stations. At the Du Quoin plant in southern Illinois, the company makes insulated power distribution cables that transmit energy underground and inside factories. Some of those cables feed power to companies that generate wind and solar energy. With the help of an estimated \$17.7 million in state tax credits, the Du Quoin site will expand by 100,000 square feet and add 80 new jobs, bringing the workforce to approximately 300.

RESIDENTS ASK REGULATORS TO REJECT UTILITIES' RATE INCREASES

The Illinois Commerce Commission is considering several rate hikes, including two sought by the utilities Peoples Gas and Ameren Illinois, who say they are needed to fund infrastructure improvements. At two recent public hearings before the ICC, members of the public railed against the proposed increases to the price of natural gas and electricity. The ICC has the authority to accept, reject or modify the amount of the increase and the other details included in the request, such as how the utility plans to spend its money and the utility's profit rate.

ICC REVIEWING AMEREN ILLINOIS STUDY OF GRID OPERATORS

The ICC has opened a notice of inquiry into a recent Ameren Illinois study examining the costs and benefits of remaining a Midcontinent Independent System Operator member compared to joining PJM Interconnection, the grid operator that serves the northern part of the state. In July of last year, the ICC directed Ameren to conduct the study, in large part due to structural market shortcomings revealed in MISO's 2022-2023 Planning Resource Auction.

AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT BLASTS IDES

A performance audit of the unemployment programs administered by the Illinois Department of Employment Security during the period of March 1, 2020 through September 6, 2021 found overpayments (which include fraud, non-fraud, and identity theft) for FY20 to FY22 totaling \$5.24 billion. While overpayments in "regular" unemployment insurance accounted for a little over \$2 billion, overpayments in the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program amounted to \$3.2 billion, according to the audit. This far exceeds prior estimates issued following warnings that the department was not following federal protocol or recommendations for distribution. PUA was federally funded, but the state is responsible for the overpayments from the "regular" UI fund. IDES recognized that there were extreme challenges in dealing with the distributions and has made numerous changes since the end of the pandemic.

STATE EMPLOYEES ACCUSED OF PPP FRAUD

Dozens of state employees across multiple agencies are under investigation by a state watchdog for claims they fraudulently obtained payments from a federal pandemic-era loan program. Neil Olson, general counsel at the Illinois Office of the Executive Inspector General, said that the OEIG's review is "systematic," involving multiple state agencies and the other governing bodies under OEIG's jurisdiction, which include state universities, boards and commissions, and regional transit boards.

NEW FLIGHT ROUTE BETWEEN CHICAGO AND MARION

Contour Airlines has established a new flight between Chicago and Marion. The new route will offer daily direct passenger flights between O'Hare in Chicago and Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois in Marion, making travel between Southern Illinois and Chicago more seamless, accessible, and affordable. This marks the first time a passenger route between O'Hare and Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois is being offered. In support of the new flight route, the Airport Authority in Marion – which oversees Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois – will receive a \$1.4 million grant through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Contour Airlines' new routes – which also include daily routes to Kirksville, Missouri, and Owensboro, Kentucky

– are part of the federal government's Essential Air Service program, aimed at maintaining air services to smaller communities. The carrier provides critical air service to 28 cities across the country.

PRITZKER, LEADERS ADVOCATE FOR \$1.1 BILLION CHICAGO HUB IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Gov. Pritzker, together with U.S. Sens. Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin, Mayor Johnson, and other leaders, gathered to advocate for the Chicago Hub Improvement Program, a transformative initiative aiming to invest nearly \$1.1 billion in regional rail infrastructure and Union Station upgrades. The plan seeks a \$872.8 million grant from the Federal Railroad Administration's Federal/State Partnership Program to enhance rail performance and reduce delays, solidifying Chicago's position as a national transportation hub. \$50 million in support will come from the Rebuild Illinois program. \$218.2 million will come from the Illinois Department of Transportation, the Chicago Department of Transportation, Cook County, Metra, the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, and the Michigan Department of Transportation combined. The proposed projects will benefit over 30 million passengers annually.

GROUNDBREAKING ON EXPANDED YOUTH CARE FACILITY

Gov. Pritzker joined Hoyleton Youth and Family Services to break ground on a construction project that will provide a new model of care for vulnerable youth 9-18 years old living in residential care. The new residential campus will allow youth, who are both developmentally and intellectually delayed and have experienced trauma, to heal and grow in a therapeutic environment.

ILLINOIS GAMING BOARD APPROVES LICENSE FOR A SPORTSBOOK IN ROCKFORD

The Illinois Gaming Board recently approved a sportsbook at the Hard Rock Casino in Rockford. DGC IL, a subsidiary of Las Vegas-based Digital Gaming Corp., is the only qualified applicant for the online sportsbook license, which unlike other operators in the state would not be tethered to any casino, racetrack or sports venue. The casino must comply with IGB rules – and pay a \$20 million licensing fee – before sports wagering can offered in-person or online.

APPELLATE COURT REVIVES LAWSUIT OVER WAUKEGAN CASINO

Illinois' First District Appellate Court sided with the Forest County Potawatomi Community, which alleges that officials did not give it fair consideration in 2019 while considering casino operators, and revived a lawsuit challenging the process used to award the casino license. The court ruled a circuit judge incorrectly dismissed the lawsuit and asserted the nonrefundable \$25,000 application fee paid for Waukegan's consideration gives the tribe legal standing. Restarting the selection process would mark a stunning reversal of fortune for Full House Resorts. Justice Raymond Mitchell ruled that there is nothing stopping the IGB from restarting the selection process if the Potawatomi end up winning their case.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

August 21, 2023

Illinois State Fair festivities generally provide a preview of each party's approach to the next general election, which is slated for November 2024. While the Democrats focused on the four criminal indictments facing former President Trump, the Republicans frequently cited the ongoing or pending trials of those in former House Speaker Michael Madigan's orbit. The Democrats contended that Illinois' rejection of Trump, along with its actions to bolster unions, protect abortion rights, and control guns, all contributed to Illinois being chosen as the site of the 2024 Democratic National Convention. Republicans criticized several of Gov. J.B. Pritzker's policies, such as the passage of a criminal justice reform law that eliminated cash bail and his veto of Senate Bill 76 (which would have allowed construction of new nuclear power in Illinois). Republicans hope to increase their footprint in 2024, as the Senate Republican Caucus holds just 19 seats compared to 40 for Democrats. The state House has a 78-40 Democratic majority, and Democrats hold all statewide elected offices.

NEW STATE LAWS AFFECTING HIGHER EDUCATION

Gov. Pritzker has acted on all bills passed by the Illinois General Assembly during the spring 2023 session. A number of newly enacted state laws affect Illinois higher education.

[Please CLICK HERE to review ICCTA's list of new state laws affecting Illinois higher education.](#)

GOVERNOR'S VETOES

The Governor has issued six vetoes or amendatory vetoes of legislation passed during the spring session:

- ❖ [Senate Bill 76](#): The bill is vetoed because the vague definitions in the bill, including the overly broad definition of advanced reactors, will open the door to the proliferation of large-scale nuclear reactors that are so costly to build that they will cause exorbitant ratepayer-funded bailouts. Additionally, it provides no regulatory protections or updates to address the health and safety of Illinois residents who would live and work around these new reactors.
- ❖ [House Bill 2507](#): The Governor has issued an Amendatory Veto due to a change that gave property tax breaks to private nursing home owners in Cook County. That break passes the tax burden to suburban Cook County homeowners and small businesses, with the most impact felt in the south suburbs. That property tax change risks driving up costs for residents and threatens local school funding.
- ❖ [House Bill 2878](#): The Governor has removed this provision through an Amendatory Veto that creates a local pathway for private industry to enter P3 agreements that skirts transparency and anti-corruption requirements established in state statute, including ethics, the Business Enterprise Program, campaign finance, and procurement laws. It also puts the state at greater risk of project failure by decreasing competition and reducing the opportunity for public input currently required under state law during the P3 project planning and implementation process.

- ❖ [House Bill 3445](#): In the Amendatory Veto Message of this omnibus energy bill, Gov. Pritzker states, “My administration appreciates the hard work of the sponsors of this legislation in the House and Senate. HB3445 contains many useful provisions to advance energy policy in Illinois. However, the right of first refusal language inserted by Senate Amendment 4 will raise costs for rate payers by giving incumbent utility providers in the MISO region a monopoly over new transmission lines. Eliminating competition will cause rates to increase in the MISO region, where there is currently over \$3.6 billion in planned transmission construction in the Ameren service territory. Without competition, Ameren ratepayers will pay for these transmission projects at a much higher cost. Competitively bidding transmission construction, instead of giving the utility a monopoly, has been shown to lower costs significantly. My administration is committed to working with stakeholders and our partners in the General Assembly to enact meaningful energy policy, however, I cannot support legislation that puts corporate profits over consumers.”
- ❖ [House Bill 3643](#): The bill is vetoed because it requires the Illinois State Board of Education to enter into a master food service contract that they cannot execute because this is a local school district responsibility. Local school districts, not ISBE, have the expertise and understanding of local needs required to enter into food service contracts based on federal USDA nutrition guidelines. The bill would restrict the capability that local school districts have to contract meal vendors based on their students’ unique local and cultural needs.
- ❖ [Senate Bill 1515](#): The bill is intended to increase protections for workers. However, due to irreconcilable drafting errors, the bill will have an adverse effect on the workers it seeks to protect.

FALL 2023 VETO SESSION

Veto session will be held **October 24 - 26 and November 7-9**. The veto of SB 76, which was approved by the General Assembly with a veto-proof majority, will likely be debated this fall.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ACCESS CONSORTIUM FOR EQUITY RELEASES FIRST REPORT

The inaugural report of the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity provides a comprehensive picture of the initiative designed to support members of the incumbent (current) workforce in their pursuit of higher education credentials. ECACE is a multifaceted effort by 61 public and private higher education institutions, six state agencies (including the Illinois Community College Board), and community partners to create and align systems and programs to meet the state’s workforce needs in early childhood education and care settings. According to the report, enrollment in higher education programs by members of the current workforce increased from the baseline year by 17.9%. This represented nearly 500 additional enrolled students. The vast majority of current workforce members continued to be enrolled in bachelor’s degree and applied associate (AAS) programs. The number and proportion of enrolled current members of the early childhood education and care workforce are both expected to increase in academic year 2023.

FEDERAL AGENCIES LAUNCH SCHOOL SAFETY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Several federal departments have launched a school safety awareness campaign to highlight federal resources and evidence-based practices available at www.schoolsafety.gov. The effort involves the U.S. Departments of Homeland Security, Education, Health and Human Services, and Justice. As part of the campaign, the Biden administration will release a range of resources, including a video, communications toolkit, and infographics,

to help schools learn more about how to improve school safety, access support, and share information about the campaign with others.

UPDATES ON APPOINTMENTS, ELECTIONS, AND INDICTMENTS

State Rep. **Lakesia Collins** was sworn in last week as the newest Senator for the 5th District after committee persons selected her to replace retired Sen. **Patricia Van Pelt** (D-Chicago). Rep. **Omar Williams** was also vying for the appointment.

House Assistant Majority Leader and Chair of the Labor & Commerce Committee **Marcus C. Evans, Jr.** was selected as the next vice president of the National Conference of State Legislatures. He will subsequently become the president-elect, then president. NCSL is a bi-partisan, non-political policy focused organization. House Speaker **Chris Welch** and Minority Leader **Tony McCombie** both supported Leader Evans.

The Cook County Democrats have released their listed of slated candidates for the 2024 primary election. Of note, Illinois Supreme Court-appointed incumbent **Joy Cunningham** was slated instead of Appellate Court Justice **Jesse Reyes**. Also, **Mariyana Spyropoulos** was slated over incumbent Circuit Court Clerk **Iris Martinez**. Slated to replace outgoing State's Attorney Kim Foxx is **Clayton Harris, III**. Expect a primary challenge for the State's Attorney's office from **Eileen O'Neill Burke**.

The obstruction of justice and perjury trial of **Tim Mapes**, the longtime chief of staff for indicted former Speaker Madigan, continues in Chicago.

UPCOMING HEARING ON IMMIGRANT HEALTHCARE RULEMAKING

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services will hold a public hearing on proposed rules amendments to Special Eligibility Groups at 11 AM on Tuesday, September 5, via WebEx. The hearing concerns proposed enrollment limitations and copays on two programs that provide medical assistance to noncitizens ages 42-64 (Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults) and 65 and older (Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors) who meet income criteria and do not qualify for federally matched Medicaid assistance.

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The Illinois Supreme Court has ruled 4-3 to uphold the state's assault weapons ban (the Protect Illinois Communities Act). The law prevents the manufacture and sale in Illinois of high-powered rifles, high-capacity magazines, and devices used to make guns fire more rapidly. The suit from state Rep. **Dan Caulkins**, R-Decatur, was part of a flurry of challenges to the constitutionality of the law after it was signed by Gov. Pritzker on January 10. The law remains in effect in Illinois despite other challenges at the federal level. Anyone who already owned one of the banned weapons prior to the law's January 10 effective date will be able to keep it but will be required to register it with the Illinois State Police.

The 7th Circuit federal appeals court heard oral arguments in a case based on the law's compliance with the U.S. Constitution on June 29. This pending federal case, which is widely expected to end up before the U.S. Supreme Court, will ultimately overrule any state court decisions.

IDNR LAUNCHES BLUEPRINT TO HELP COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has released a climate action plan to serve as a blueprint for reducing the agency's carbon footprint and achieving Gov. Pritzker's greenhouse gas reduction goals by 2050. Plans include a pollinator-friendly solar installation, electric charging stations in state parks, and greater use of electric vehicles and equipment.

ILLINOIS EPA ANNOUNCES DATES OF NEXT EV REBATE PROGRAM FUNDING ROUND

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has announced that the next funding round for Illinois' Electric Vehicle Rebate Program will open Wednesday, November 1, 2023 and run through Wednesday, January 31, 2024. EV purchasers must apply for a rebate within 90 days of the vehicle purchase date. Individuals who purchase a new or used all-electric vehicle from an Illinois licensed dealer, meet all other eligibility requirements, and apply during the rebate cycle will be eligible for a rebate as long as funds are available, not to exceed \$12 million.

LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT ADVISORY BOARD REPORT

The Lead Service Line Replacement Advisory Board approved a report that provides recommendations to the General Assembly and Governor Pritzker concerning lead service line replacement. The report includes recommendations from two working groups: a technical working group, which focused on implementation challenges; and a financing working group, which focused on financial and revenue considerations.

BIDEN APPROVES PRITZKER'S ILLINOIS SEVERE WEATHER DISASTER DECLARATION

President Biden has signed a [Disaster Declaration](#) allowing the Federal Emergency Management Agency to offer assistance for residents in Cook County who were impacted by severe weather in July. FEMA's aid could include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and businesses owners recover from the effects of the storms.

CHOATE DIRECTOR REPLACED

Bryant Davis, who served as the Choate Developmental Center's top administrator since 2014, has been replaced by Stephany Hoehner, who has worked as a project manager at the facility since March. In March, IDHS secretary Grace Hou unveiled a plan to move more than half of Choate's 225 residents with developmental disabilities out within three years and improve safety at the center for those who remained.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

September 6, 2023

The 2024 election season is officially underway as candidate petition circulation kicked off yesterday, September 5. The state's petition filing period runs from November 27 through December 4. Candidates are working to appear on the March 19, 2024, Illinois primary ballot.

VETO SESSION PREVIEW

The Illinois General Assembly's fall 2023 veto session will take place **October 24-26 and November 7-9**. This session is expected to be more active than previous years under Gov. JB Pritzker's administration. Due to a few of the Governor's veto actions, significant friction exists between labor and the environmentalists. In addition, the Illinois Brotherhood of Electrical Workers uninvited him to a national union conference in Chicago last week at the Hyatt Hotel. Gov. Pritzker was supposed to headline the event.

For the bills that received total vetoes (primarily [Senate Bill 76](#), which would have ended Illinois's ban on the construction of advanced nuclear reactors), lawmakers will now have an opportunity to override those vetoes with a 3/5 majority of votes. If a vetoed bill is not called for a vote, the veto stands, and the bill dies.

For the bills that received amendatory vetoes (primarily [House Bill 3445](#), which would allow Ameren the right of first refusal for transmission projects in the MISO territory, and [HB 2878](#), which would have enabled public/private partnership transportation projects with the intention of Interstate 55 expansion), the legislature can either vote to approve the Governor's amendments to the bill with a simple majority vote, or override the amendatory veto with a 3/5 majority vote to approve the original bill. If the bill is not called for either vote, the bill dies. Both bills passed through the General Assembly with bipartisan support, and both were pitched as helping create jobs, lower utility costs, and promote clean energy.

NEW STATE LAWS AFFECTING HIGHER EDUCATION

Gov. Pritzker has acted on all bills passed by the Illinois General Assembly during the spring 2023 session. A number of newly enacted state laws affect Illinois higher education.

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COD FACULTY MEMBERS AUTHORIZE STRIKE

The College of DuPage Faculty Association says that its members have been working without a contract since a multiyear pact expired May 31. Negotiations on a new deal started in February. The members voted to authorize a strike on August 25, although that vote does not mean a strike is imminent at the state's largest community college. The faculty's bargaining team is required to file a 10-day notice of intent to strike with the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board before a walkout can occur. The strike threat comes about a month after the two sides entered federal mediation. The next mediation session was September 5.

According to the COD union, one of the sticking points is the board's proposal to remove 18 part-time counseling positions, which would leave just 10 full-time counselors. The board also proposed adding full-time advising positions, but those positions will not offer mental health services.

HOUSE PENSION HEARING UPDATE

Illinois legislators met for the third time to discuss a measure that aims to provide an additional \$500 million yearly for the state's pension systems to address massive unfunded liabilities. [HB 4098](#), which has been the center of conversation during these hearings, is an omnibus bill with many ideas to address Illinois' pension debt, including safe harbor provisions of Tier 2 pensions. The subject of the third hearing was buyout plans and DROP, or Deferred Retirement Option Plan, which is an alternative payment method for active public employees. Hearings will continue throughout the summer to learn about other aspects contained in HB 4098. Committee Chair Rep. Stephanie Kifowit (D-Oswego) would like to pass some reforms during the next legislative session.

The next two committee hearings will occur on **September 6** and **September 27**.

GOOD NEWS ON STATE FINANCES

The Illinois Comptroller's [Annual Comprehensive Financial Report](#) showed that the state had a General Funds surplus for the first time since 1985. The surplus for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022 was \$1.5 billion, improving \$4.6 billion from the previous fiscal year.

There was also another tiny bit of good news in the report. The state's "net position" improved from a deficit of \$199.2 billion at the end of Fiscal Year 2021 to \$184.8 at the end of Fiscal Year 2022 -- a \$14.4 billion reduction in red ink. The state's net position is described as representing "the deferral of current and prior year costs to future periods," and includes things like the pension debt.

STATE PORTFOLIO INVESTMENTS

In July, the state's investment portfolio pulled in \$121.6 million, a one-month record for Illinois, according to Treasurer Frerichs. It was driven by a record 4.52% interest rate earned on the state's assets. The investment income for July topped the previous record – set one month prior – of \$115.7 million. "State legislators budget public money that is collected, but that money is not spent all at once," Frerichs' office said in a news release. "State agencies, boards and commissions require assistance managing their cash and investing all remaining funds. That's where the Office of the Illinois Treasurer steps in."

RETIREMENTS, APPOINTMENTS, AND CONVICTIONS

State Rep. **Lance Yednock** (D-Ottawa) has announced that he will not seek re-election next year, but he will serve the remainder of his term. Yednock has represented the 76th District since 2019. In his statement, Yednock indicated he believed that his moderate tendencies hurt him with his own party. "I understand that if I cannot get the legislature to understand how downstate needs resources, then I must admit to myself that a different representative may get a better outcome, and that is far more important to me than a future reelection campaign" Yednock said. Yednock's chief of staff, **Amy Murri Briel**, has formed a campaign committee and is exploring a bid for the seat.

State Sen. **Win Stoller** (R-Germantown Hills) announced that he will not seek a third term. Stoller, appointed in 2020 to the seat then occupied by former state Sen. Chuck Weaver, said that he plans to serve the remainder of his term.

Former Democratic state Sen. **Steven Landek**, who retired from the Senate in January after more than a decade in Springfield but still serves as mayor of southwest suburban Bridgeview, was appointed to the Illinois Finance Authority. The Finance Authority Board oversees a state agency that provides access to low-cost capital to public and private institutions to spur economic development.

Following a three-week trial, a federal jury found Michael Madigan's former chief of staff, **Tim Mapes**, guilty of perjury and obstruction of justice charges for lying to the grand jury. He repeatedly said that he either did not recall or did not know about actions that Madigan and his mutual friend, influential lobbyist Mike McClain, were allegedly doing on the speaker's behalf. Mapes is facing 20 years on the obstruction charge and 5 years for perjury. The sentencing hearing has been tentatively set for January 10, 2024.

NEW EMPLOYMENT-RELATED LAWS

The National Law Review recently published a lengthy synopsis on newly signed state legislation ([HERE](#)) that will impact Illinois employers. Topics include new job posting disclosure obligations, new and expanded leave benefits, new commuter benefits, extension of liability to employers under the Gender Violence Act, expanded protections for temporary workers, new protections for freelance workers, increased access to personnel records, electronic distribution of employee notices, limitation on damages available against striking workers, new penalties for interfering with labor disputes. The article also contains tips on how to prepare for these new changes.

ILLINOIS SECURES \$1.3M FEDERAL GRANT TO PROMOTE WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

A \$1.3 million federal grant to the Illinois Department of Labor will help bring more women into the construction industry, where they make up barely 4% of the workforce nationwide. The grant money comes as part of President **Joe Biden's** signature \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package signed into law almost two years ago and aims to promote gender equity and inclusion in the male-dominated field. The funds will go to IDOL and the nonprofit Chicago Women in Trades, which will then dole out their own grants to a handful of workforce development groups putting together equity plans. That includes apprenticeship programs and other pathway programs.

PRITZKER, LEADERS CALL ON WHITE HOUSE TO EXPAND WORK PERMITS FOR IMMIGRANTS

Gov. Pritzker, Chicago Mayor **Brandon Johnson**, and multiple other Illinois leaders (including the heads of the Illinois Manufacturers Association, the Illinois Restaurant Association, and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce) are urging President Biden to expand work permits to the thousands of undocumented immigrants that have been transported to the state from the U.S./Mexico border. While some of the migrants have entered the country illegally, many have claimed refugee status, fleeing Central American countries. Awaiting asylum hearings and receiving legal work permits can take months under current federal rules.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL TAX BENEFITS AVAILABLE FOR BOTH PARENTS AND EDUCATORS

The Illinois Department of Revenue is reminding taxpayers that they may be able to claim school expenses for their K-12 students on their 2023 Illinois individual income tax returns. **The Illinois Education Expense**

Credit allows parents or legal guardians of a full-time K-12 student under the age of 21 to take a 25% tax credit on qualified education expenses over \$250 this year. Qualified educational expenses include tuition, book rental, and lab fees. The total credit may not exceed \$750, regardless of the number of qualifying students. **The K-12 Instructional Materials and Supplies Tax Credit** allows eligible teachers of full-time K-12 students to receive a tax break of up to \$500 for qualified expenses on classroom materials paid during the taxable year. If spouses are both educators and are filing jointly, the maximum credit is \$1,000.

WELCH, HOUSE LEADERS TO TRAVEL TO ISRAEL, PALESTINE FOR DIPLOMATIC TRIP

House Speaker **Chris Welch** (D-Westchester) and members of the Illinois House leadership team will be travelling to Israel and Palestine from Aug. 31 through September 9 as part of a delegation led by the Jewish United Fund. Speaker Welch said that the delegation will meet with both Israeli and Palestinian leaders, visit important religious and historical sites, and make connections to better learn about the complexities of the Middle East region.

SUSTAINABLE FUELS CAUCUS ESTABLISHED

State Rep. **Terra Costa Howard** (D-Glen Ellyn) and five other legislators have formed the Sustainable Fuels Caucus to address domestic energy supply needs, offer policy solutions to air and environmental quality issues, and explore alternative energies like ethanol, hydrogen and biodiesel. Costa Howard, who is also vice chair of the Hydrogen Economy Task Force, said that the caucus is an opportunity to educate the public on alternative fuels. The other caucus members are Reps. **Eva Dina Delgado, Dave Vella, Ann Williams, Dagmara Avelar.** and Sen. **Patrick Joyce.**

‘SKIP-THE-LINE’ APPOINTMENTS AVAILABLE AT ILLINOIS DMVS

Illinois Secretary of State **Alexi Giannoulias** is rolling out a slew of changes at the state’s DMV locations, aimed at cutting lines and making some services easier to access as part of the “Skip-the-Line” initiative announced earlier this summer. As of September 1, a wider range of services will be offered online at www.ilsos.gov, including renewing driver’s license or ID cards as well as license plate stickers. All DMV locations will also offer extended hours, serving customers Monday through Friday 8 AM to 5:30 PM. An additional 15 DMVs will also be open on Saturdays, 8 AM to 12:30 PM.

In-person visits will now be required for certain services at 44 of the busiest DMVs in the state, including all Chicago locations and some central and downstate locations. These services include REAL ID, driver’s license and ID card services, and in-car driving tests. Those seeking services such as title and registration or renewing their license plate sticker do not need to make an appointment.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING ANNOUNCED FOR CAIRO PORT

Both the state and federal governments are sending additional money for plans to develop a riverport in southern Illinois at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The Alexander-Cairo Port District will receive a \$150,000 federal grant to develop a master plan to identify the scope for port development and the future of the riverport. In addition, the Illinois Department of Transportation recently authorized an additional \$790,000 for planning and development. The state money is part of a \$40 million investment that was originally appropriated in the 2019 Rebuild Illinois capital improvements program. State officials had originally hoped to start construction on the project in 2022 and to have it operational in 2024. But the project stalled

amid disagreements between IDOT and port district officials over how the state funds appropriated so far have been spent.

NEW CASINO OPENS IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

The long-awaited Walker's Bluff Casino and Resort is the fourth of six casinos authorized in a 2019 gambling bill that is now operational. Located just outside of Carterville, the casino features 650 slot machines and table games, a hotel, restaurants, a full-service spa, and a 1,200-seat event center. It is expected to employ about 300 people. Proceeds from the gambling expansion were earmarked, in part, to provide funding for Rebuild Illinois, the state's multi-year capital improvement program to repair and build new roads, bridges and government buildings across the state.

USDA ISSUES ADDITIONAL ILLINOIS DROUGHT DISASTER DESIGNATIONS

U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Thomas J. Vilsack has issued a Disaster Declaration for McDonough, McHenry and Mercer counties for drought conditions that occurred during the 2023 Illinois growing season. This is in addition to Adams, Calhoun, Hancock, Jackson, Monroe, Fulton, Mason, Tazewell, Perry, Pike, Randolph, St. Clair and Washington counties that previously received a Disaster Declaration. A USDA disaster designation allows the USDA Farm Service Agency to provide emergency loans to producers recovering from natural disasters.

STATE LOOKS TO CURB VEHICLE THEFT WITH GRANTS TO POLICE TASK FORCES

Six interagency law enforcement task forces received state grant funding this spring to combat car thefts. The grants were allocated by the Illinois Vehicle Hijacking and Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention and Insurance Verification Council, an initiative of the Illinois Secretary of State's office. Lawmakers created the group in 1991 under the authority of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. According to the council's website, between 1991 and 2014, the annual number of motor vehicle thefts in Illinois dropped 70% from 75,214 to 22,854. In March 2015, then-Gov. **Bruce Rauner** issued an executive order freezing state grants for that fiscal year. In 2018, lawmakers gave SOS state authority over the council, and the General Assembly began allocating funding again in 2019. In May 2022, lawmakers expanded the council's scope to emphasize vehicular hijacking prevention, and lawmakers allocated another \$30 million to supplement the fund's \$21 million balance as part of a broader election-year budget package aimed at addressing crime. The task force fills a needed void. In the Metro East alone, SOS officials say that they recovered 547 stolen vehicles valued at over \$8 million between July 2022 and June 30, 2023.

CHICAGO SUES KIA AND HYUNDAI FOR LACK OF ANTI-THEFT TECHNOLOGY

Mayor Johnson recently announced that the city of Chicago filed a lawsuit against Kia and Hyundai for failing to include "industry-standard engine immobilizers" in multiple vehicle models sold in the United States, "resulting in a steep rise in vehicle thefts, reckless driving, property damage, and a wide array of related violent crimes in Chicago."

Johnson's suit follows Illinois Attorney General **Kwame Raoul** and other attorneys general joining together to urge a federal court not to accept a proposed class-action settlement with Hyundai and Kia related to car thefts. The issue is that the proposed settlement requires modifications, whereas the attorneys general want the companies to recall the impacted vehicles. The court has since rejected the settlement. Illinois is not a

party to the litigation, but Raoul and his office are closely monitoring given the high number of car thefts in Illinois. In 2022, there were over 7,000 Hyundai and Kia thefts in Chicago.

MICROLINK DEVICES ANNOUNCE MANUFACTURING EXPANSION IN NILES

MicroLink Devices has entered into a new Reimagining Energy and Vehicles in Illinois agreement with the state for the company's \$9.5 million facility expansion in Niles. The expansion will enable the company to grow its design and manufacturing operations for the production of solar cells and solar sheets and to construct a new state-of-the-art testing and assembly lab. The expansion creates 9 new jobs while retaining 54 jobs.

MEDICAID ENROLLMENT UPDATE

State Medicaid enrollment continues to go down, largely due to the fact that more than 47,000 people were removed from the beginning of August based on re-enrollment requirements. More than 34,000 were removed for failing to respond or provide the necessary information to continue on Medicaid. Those removed can re-enroll if they provide the needed information within 90 days. Recently the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services sent a letter to the Illinois Department of Human and Family Services, inquiring about longer than usual call times at Medicaid call centers and stated that that may be impacting individuals' ability to renew Medicaid coverage. HFS responded that it is leveraging all of its available resources to ensure access for those trying to respond to the redetermination process.

INCREASED ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR RURAL FARMERS

The Illinois Department of Agriculture has unveiled a new grant program aimed at reducing the stigma for farmers and their families in agricultural communities who need mental health care services. Gov. Pritzker and IDOA Director **Jerry Costello** announced the program alongside the Illinois FFA Foundation and the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine at the 2023 Farm Progress Show in Decatur. The Farm Family Resource Initiative began as a telehealth mental health program covering six counties. The FFRI was later expanded to cover all 102 counties and offers six free telehealth mental health sessions. The program expansion will also fund up to 20 grants at \$1,000 each to support FFA chapters implementing local initiatives encouraging access to mental health resources. The Farm Family Resource Initiative also operates at 24/7 helpline for farmers, available at 1-833-FARM-SOS.

UBER ENABLES AUDIO RECORDING FEATURE IN CHICAGO

Uber has rolled out a new feature that allows drivers and riders to record audio during the trip to deter and resolve conflicts. The feature will pop up on the app, giving both the driver and rider an option to hit the record button for all or part of the journey. The completed audio file is encrypted and stored on the user's smartphone for 7 days.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

September 18, 2023

The 2024 election season is officially underway! Candidates are announcing campaigns all over the state and passing petitions to get on the March 19 primary ballot. We will have a better sense of who will be on the ballot after the filing period closes on December 4.

VETO SESSION PREVIEW

The fall 2023 veto session will take place **October 24-26 and November 7-9**. In addition to considering the legislation vetoed by the Governor, lawmakers will also be considering whether to renew the Invest in Kids Act Tax Credit Scholarship Program, set to expire at the end of this year. According to a press release issued by a coalition supporting the credit, over 41,000 scholarships have been offered since the inception of the program. If the General Assembly does not take action, 9,500 current recipients will lose their scholarships.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS

Rep. **Jennifer Ladish-Douglass** (D-Elmhurst) has announced that she will not seek re-election. Ladish-Douglass defeated incumbent **Deanne Mazzochi** (R) in 2022 to represent the 45th House District.

Rep. **Justin Slaughter** has been chosen by his colleagues as the next House Chair of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus.

SEIU Healthcare organizer **Yolanda Morris** has been appointed to Sen. **Lakesia Collins'** former House seat. Morris was backed by Sen. Collins, who is also from SEIU. Morris worked with her union on the \$15 an hour minimum wage, and her work as a certified nursing assistant in nursing homes for more than 20 years was highlighted by SEIU Healthcare back in 2018.

Rep. **John Egofske**, who was appointed to replace former House Republican Leader **Jim Durkin**, has decided not to run again in 2024. He has endorsed **Nicole La Ha Zwiernan**, a former Homer Glen Trustee and special needs advocate. Egofske will continue as Mayor of Lemont.

Illinois Department of Human Services secretary **Grace Hou** has been named deputy governor for Health and Human Services, which oversees IDHS and the Departments of Children and Family Services, Healthcare and Family Services, Public Health, and related state agencies. Hou is currently leading a restructuring of the state's system of care for developmentally and mentally disabled individuals and will begin her new role on October 9. Hou replaces **Sol Flores**, who has been deputy governor since January 2019. Flores's final day will be October 13. **Dulce M. Quintero** will become acting secretary of IDHS.

Gov. **JB Pritzker** has appointed **Quiwana Bell** as the assistant secretary for the Office of Firearm Violence Prevention, which operates under IDHS. She will begin in her role on October 1. OFVP was created in 2021 following the passage of the Reimagine Public Safety Act, to take a "comprehensive approach to reducing

firearm violence through community investments to address root causes and provide those most at-risk with access to evidence-based and trauma-informed services.” The office has provided roughly \$215 million to 170 different community-based organizations across the state.

HOUSE STAFFERS SEEK UNION STATUS

More than 20 staffers in Illinois House Speaker **Emanuel “Chris” Welch**’s office have renewed their efforts to be recognized as a union. The employees, whose roles include research and legislative functions, formed the Illinois Legislative Staff Association earlier this year in a bid for higher wages and better benefits. They went public with their intentions to unionize in May but in a recent statement, the association said that the Speaker has not been willing to discuss the issue with the group despite requests it has made over the last nine months.

UNDERGRAD ENROLLMENT UP IN ILLINOIS

Universities across Illinois have released their ten-day figures. These numbers are the traditional benchmark for reporting enrollment at colleges and universities:

- Enrollment of first-year students at **University of Illinois System** universities hit a record number of 13,231 students – and 74% come from Illinois. Total undergraduate enrollment also reached a record high with 60,013 undergraduates.
- **Eastern Illinois University** reported strong numbers in targeted areas. International enrollment reached record highs with both the number of students (880) and the number of countries represented (60).
- **Illinois State University** welcomed its largest incoming class in 36 years with 4,147 freshmen, a 4% increase from last year. Total enrollment at ISU is at 20,989 – up by 1.5%. The student body is becoming more diverse, as approximately 41% of this year’s freshman class come from traditionally underrepresented groups.
- For the first time since 2014, enrollment at **Southern Illinois University Carbondale** has grown. Overall enrollment for fall 2023 is 11,359 — 252 students, or 2.3%, more than last year — the highest overall boost in the number of students in 21 years and highest percentage increase in over 30 years. The university also saw a 10.8% increase in new transfer students to 1,188. Part of that success can be attributed to Saluki Step Ahead agreements signed with more than 40 community colleges in Illinois, Missouri, and Texas since 2021. Saluki Step Ahead provides a seamless path for students who earn associate degrees in participating community colleges to obtain their SIU bachelor’s degrees online in select programs.
- **Western Illinois University**’s fall 2023 total new student (freshman, transfer and graduate for both Macomb and Quad Cities) enrollment is 2,145. WIU has 1,226 full-time freshmen – an increase of 152 students from last year. Western’s total fall 2023 enrollment is 7,073.

RETIREMENT OF OUTSTANDING STATE DEBT

Gov. Pritzker announced that \$449 million in tobacco bonds have been retired through a defeasance, benefiting taxpayers through debt service savings and interest earnings in an aggregate of \$50 million. The bonds represent what remained of a \$1.5 billion debt associated with the Great Recession, dating back to 2010, when the state was struggling with a multi-billion bill backlog.

CHICAGO'S 2024 BUDGET FORECAST REVEALS \$538 MILLION SHORTFALL

Chicago's financial outlook for the 2024 fiscal year was unveiled by Mayor Brandon Johnson, as he disclosed a budget gap of \$538 million. The mayor assured taxpayers that the base property tax levy would remain untouched. Johnson said that he anticipates increased expenditures in 2024, which include Chicago's promise to be a "Welcoming City" for asylum seekers transported by the state of Texas to Chicago, alongside expected rises in personnel, pension, and contractual costs. The mayor said that he hopes the General Assembly will be able to collaborate to seek federal support and to increase the state budget line for immigrant services.

ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT OUTLINES PREPARATIONS FOR END OF CASH BAIL

Illinois will become the first state to completely abolish cash bail, effective September 18, 2023. The state Supreme Court has outlined many of its preparations for the implementation of the Pretrial Fairness Act, passed as part of [Public Act 101-0652](#) (Slaughter/Sims) and deemed constitutional by the court on July 18, 2023.

- ❖ One of those measures was the creation of the Illinois Judicial College Committee on Pretrial Education as a standing committee of the Illinois Judicial College. The CPE will provide judges, pretrial officers, and other judicial branch partners with ongoing continuing education to overview and discuss the substantive and procedural law, rules, materials, and pretrial resources.
- ❖ In August 2021, the Court also created the Office of Statewide Pretrial Services, which has quickly grown to a staff of approximately 170 and is operational in 70 counties in Illinois.
- ❖ The legislature created a \$10 million Public Defender Fund to be used by the Illinois Supreme Court to provide funding to all counties except Cook for public defenders and public defender services. The 101 counties will receive from \$77,000 up to \$147,555 using a formula based on several factors. This additional funding is expected to be transformative for public defenders and their clients across Illinois. It is expected to be distributed in the next few weeks.
- ❖ The ability to monitor and analyze the effectiveness of the Safe-T Act is contingent upon the ability to collect pretrial data and produce useful reports to the Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, Chief Judges, stakeholders, and the public. OSPS and other AOIC divisions have been working to identify existing capabilities and gaps that need to be closed to allow data collection and reporting.
- ❖ The advent of pretrial reform prompted the amendment of 20 Illinois Supreme Court rules and the repeal of seven more. Those amendments were held in abeyance while the Court considered a challenge to the constitutionality of the Pretrial Fairness Act, and they will now take effect on September 18, with the commencement of the pretrial hearings contemplated by the Act. The Court's website also now provides forms for appeals from those hearings.

IDPH ENDORSES CDC RECOMMENDATION FOR UPDATED COVID-19 SHOTS

IDPH has endorsed the recommendation by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for the newly FDA-approved COVID-19 shots for everyone over the age of 6 months. The federal agencies have given the green light for updated mRNA vaccines developed by Moderna and Pfizer that target the currently circulating strains of the COVID-19 virus. The federal guidance comes as data indicates an uptick in COVID-19 hospitalizations in Illinois and the nation, with a 7% increase statewide in the week ending September 2. These newly approved shots are considered safe when given at the same time as other vaccines for the flu and RSV.

EXECUTIVE INSPECTOR GENERAL REFERS 177 PPP FRAUD CASES TO LAW ENFORCEMENT

In 2022, the Office of the Illinois Executive Inspector General initiated a large-scale fraud investigation project to examine whether state employees improperly obtained federal Paycheck Protection Program loans. PPP loans were issued to provide relief to small businesses affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and were eligible for forgiveness if used for qualifying expenses. Using publicly available information, the OEIG identified PPP loans obtained by state employees. Because a preliminary review of the data revealed a large number of such loans, the OEIG initially focused the investigation on PPP loans of approximately \$20,000 or more. To be eligible for a PPP loan of that size, a business typically would have needed to generate approximately \$100,000 or more of annual net profit or gross income -- earned outside of the employee's full-time state work hours. Once the OEIG identified these PPP loans, it conducted further investigation to determine whether employees received those loans in a fraudulent manner. To date, the OEIG has initiated 438 such investigations, concluded 204 investigations, and of those, 177 were referred to law enforcement -- loan amounts total more than \$4.5 million in public funds. Most of the founded cases (132) have been among employees at the state Department of Human Services.

COMPLAINT ALLEGES COMED VIOLATED STATE LAW BY RAISING CUSTOMER FEES

A group of businesses filed a complaint with state regulators last week alleging that Chicago electric company ComEd improperly raised customer bills this summer. The complaint -- centered on a portion of the 2021 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act that allows utilities to recoup carbon mitigation investments -- alleges the utility failed to follow the proper regulatory channels laid out in Gov. Pritzker's marquee climate policy. The complaint was filed by the Chemical Industry Council of Illinois, a trade group that lobbies for chemical businesses, alleging that the change in billing will cost its roughly 100 member companies about \$100 million combined between June 2023 and May 2024. Eight other groups are also listed as complainants, including Loyola Academy, a suburban Catholic school. The Illinois Commerce Commission will consider the complaint, which could set a precedent allowing the oversight agency to have tighter control over how fees are calculated.

While businesses filed the complaint, the CFRA charge appears on residential customers' bills as well. ComEd serves 3.8 million residential customers and 400,000 non-residential customers, according to data from the ICC. For residential customers, this fee currently accounts for around 7% of total monthly bills, depending on local taxes and electric usage.

LG STRATTON LED ILLINOIS DELEGATION TO JAPAN

Lt. Governor **Juliana Stratton** led a delegation of state officials and business leaders to Japan from September 10-12 at the 53rd Annual Joint Meeting of the Japan-Midwest U.S. Associations Conference in Tokyo. At that event, governors and economic development leaders from the Midwest met with governors and corporate executives from Japan. The Lieutenant Governor's first international delegation focused on strengthening economic cooperation between Illinois and Japan. Joining Stratton and her staff were **Kristin Richards**, director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and representatives from several Illinois business interests including the Illinois Realtors and the Illinois Manufacturer's Association.

ILLINOIS PAUSES COPAY REQUIREMENT FOR NONCITIZENS

In June, HFS announced that it would roll back several health care provisions for noncitizens between the ages of 42 and 64 covered by the HBIA program, as well as those over 65 who are covered by the HBIS program.

Among those changes, HFS would require copays from enrollees who were not eligible for a federal match. That would mean inpatient visits could cost \$250, and an emergency visit could impose a \$100 copay. But on September 5, HFS sent out a notice to providers, writing that co-pays have not been implemented yet, and cost-sharing from providers should be completed before patients are asked to dole out co-pays or coinsurance. HFS is also instructing health care providers to refund any co-pays they already collected. **Omar Shaker**, HFS' chief of administrative rules, told a legislative oversight committee last week that the department ultimately plans to reinstate the copay policy, but it does not yet have the systems in place to properly administer it.

PRITZKER, GOTION ANNOUNCE \$2 BILLION EV BATTERY FACILITY IN MANTENO

Illinois' first electric vehicle battery manufacturer will begin operating in Manteno in 2024, bringing 2,600 jobs to Kankakee County and kickstarting the green energy economy in the state. The Governor's office said that the gigafactory was made possible through a \$536 million Reimaging Energy and Vehicles Illinois tax credit package. About \$213 million of that amount will go toward payroll tax credits. Gotion will be the first recipient of Invest in Illinois funding, in the amount of \$125 million under the Governor's discretionary purview. Gotion will also receive a local property tax abatement for 30 years.

INCOBRASA INDUSTRIES BREAKS GROUND ON \$250 MILLION MANUFACTURING FACILITY EXPANSION

Gov. Pritzker and DCEO officials joined state and local leaders to celebrate the groundbreaking of Incobrasa Industries LTD's expanded manufacturing facility in Gilman. The expansion represents more than \$250 million in capital investment and will create 40 new full-time jobs while retaining 200 jobs. The Gilman plant processes soybeans to produce animal feed, packaged vegetable oil, and biodiesel. This expansion will enable the company to make use of the vast supply of soybeans that are available in Illinois, which is the largest soybean producer in the United States. The project will include a 50-acre solar array that will have the capacity to generate 5 megawatts of energy, which can be used to provide power directly to the plant or to feed the grid.

UPSIDE FOODS' FIRST COMMERCIAL-SCALE CULTIVATED MEAT PRODUCTION PLANT SET FOR GLENVIEW

UPSIDE Foods – a leading cultivated meat, poultry and seafood company -- will locate its first commercial-scale production facility in Glenview. As the first cultivated meat company to receive FDA approval, UPSIDE's new Glenview facility marks a major milestone for cultivated meat production, supporting Illinois' ecosystem and adding to the state's dominance in the food processing industry. Bolstered by one of the first EDGE for Start Ups agreements, the company will invest at least \$141 million and create a minimum of 75 new jobs.

BALLY'S OPENS CHICAGO'S FIRST CASINO AS TEMPORARY SITE AT MEDINAH TEMPLE

Bally's Chicago finally got the green light from the Illinois Gaming Board to launch the city's long-sought first casino. Medinah Temple in River North opened last weekend. Bally's successfully completed two days of practice gaming sessions under the watchful eyes of regulatory staff and an outside auditing firm Wednesday and Thursday, earning the casino a temporary operating permit from the Gaming Board. Proceeds from the practice sessions will be donated to local Chicago charities during a ribbon-cutting ceremony later this month. In addition, Bally's must pay the Gaming Board more than \$135 million in upfront fees within 30 days, which will be used to fund infrastructure projects statewide.

Rhode Island-based Bally's won a heated competition last year, besting four other proposals with its plan to build a \$1.74 billion casino at the site of Tribune Publishing's Freedom Center printing plant in River West. It

plans to open the permanent casino in 2026. Medinah Temple will serve as a temporary casino for up to three years while the permanent facility is built. Bally's Chicago will be open seven days a week from 8 AM to 4 AM.

CHICAGO PUBLIC TRANSIT ACTION PLAN UNVEILED

A new report offers solutions to bolster the long-term sustainability of public transit in the Chicago area as the region's transit agencies contend with fewer riders and a massive budget shortfall worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has released a plan that it claims will keep the Chicago Transit Authority, Metra, and the suburban bus system Pace (which have been relying on federal COVID relief funds) financially afloat and affordable for riders. The plan includes recommendations for new revenue sources, incentives to bolster ridership – such as reduced fare cards and universal fare passes – and a complete restructuring of the governing boards tasked with keeping the buses and trains running. The draft plan will go before the planning agency's board for a vote next month before it is sent to the Governor and lawmakers by January 1, 2024. The General Assembly will then decide how to proceed.

ILLINOIS JOINS GLOBAL CAMPAIGN TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT OPIOID RECOVERY

The Chicago skyline was lit purple to honor those in recovery from September 8-14, in recognition of September as National Recovery Month. Illinois residents were encouraged to join over 13,000 IDHS staff and wear purple throughout the month to celebrate family and friends who are in recovery. Events such as training, speaking engagements, memorials, and online activities will be hosted by IDHS' community partners during Recovery Month. These events are critical to addressing and removing the stigma associated with overdose deaths and encouraging the public to support families and communities in remembrance of those who have lost their lives.

SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM FUNDING AWARDED TO ILLINOIS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service has awarded over \$544,000 in Fiscal Year 2023 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funding to Illinois. With this grant, the Illinois Department of Agriculture will fund eight projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop products and create new market opportunities for the state's specialty crop producers. Among IDOA's projects is \$50,000 for the Gardeneers' Growing Food + Equitable Justice Project, where gardeneers will partner with schools in under-resourced communities. Additional funded projects focus on areas including urban agriculture, disease mitigation in cucurbits, and the shelf life of strawberries.

2023 ILLINOIS STATE FAIR SETS HISTORIC ATTENDANCE RECORDS

The more than 700,000 attendees over the 11-day event made the 2023 Illinois State Fair the most highly attended fair since industry standards were enacted. Planning is now underway for the 2024 Illinois State Fair, which will run August 8-18.

ILLINOIS-WISCONSIN TEST CROSS-BORDER INTEROPERABLE COMMUNICATIONS

The Illinois/Wisconsin Interoperable Communications Exercise took place in the North Dunes Nature Preserve and Adeline Jay Geo-Karis Illinois Beach State Park in Zion, Illinois on September 13. This cross-border exercise is intended to test emergency communication capabilities with response personnel from Illinois and Wisconsin. The Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency evaluated the participating agencies during the exercise.

IDOI JOINS COALITION SEEKING TO PROTECT CONSUMERS

The Illinois Department of Insurance joined five other state Departments of Insurance last week to increase protections for millions of health insurance consumers. The state DOIs sent a signed letter in support of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' proposed rule to restrict Short-Term Limited Duration Insurance and fixed indemnity insurance plans which do not provide comprehensive health coverage and are not subject to the same regulatory standards as comprehensive health coverage. STLDI is a type of health insurance that is designed to fill temporary gaps in coverage when an individual is transitioning from one source of coverage to another. The product was never designed to be more than "GAP" insurance, and it fills a market that must be covered. These basic facts were left out of the letter. Currently, Illinois has 15 STLDI issuers.

OSFM ANNOUNCES \$4 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR SMALL EQUIPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

The Office of the State Fire Marshal has announced that the application period is open for the Small Equipment Grant Program. The OSFM will award \$4 million to eligible fire departments and ambulance services for the purchase of small firefighting and ambulance equipment. All interested departments should send an application to OSFM electronically or postmarked no later than December 15. The Small Equipment Grant Program was established to provide grants of up to \$26,000 to eligible departments. A total of \$1.5 million was awarded to 64 fire departments/districts and EMS providers across the state in March.

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

October 2, 2023

Candidates for the U.S. Congress and Illinois House and Senate seats are making campaign announcements and passing petitions to get on the March 2023 primary ballot. We will have a better sense of who will be running after the petition filing period closes on December 4.

The Illinois General Assembly's fall veto session will take place **October 24-26 and November 7-9**.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS

State Rep. **Randy Frese** (R-Quincy) will not seek another term in the 99th Illinois House District, which covers west central Illinois. Frese, who has represented the district since 2015, will serve for the remainder of his term. He has already expressed support for the first person to announce interest in running – **Kyle Moore**, former Quincy mayor and current president and CEO of the Great River Economic Development Foundation.

Frese is the 8th state legislator to make such an announcement this fall. He joins Reps. **Jonathan Carroll** (D-Northbrook), **Dan Caulkins** (R-Decatur), **John Egofske** (R-Lemont), **Jenn Ladisch Douglass** (D-Elmhurst), **Michael Marron** (R-Fithian); and Sens. **Tom Bennett** (R-Gibson City) and **Win Stoller** (R-Peoria) – all of whom will serve out their current terms but not seek re-election.

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation has announced that **Susana Soriano** will serve as the next Director of Banking. Appointed by Gov. **JB Pritzker**, Soriano previously served as the Deputy Director of Banking after joining IDFPR in October 2020. Her appointment is pending confirmation by the Illinois Senate.

SPEAKER INTRODUCES BILL TO ALLOW UNIONIZED LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Illinois House Speaker **Emanuel "Chris" Welch** has filed legislation to authorize legislative staff to form a union and engage in collective bargaining. [House Bill 4148](#), which would create the Legislative Employee Labor Relations Act, comes in response to a monthslong effort by Democratic staff in the speaker's office to unionize and negotiate wages, hours and other working conditions.

ISBE HOLDING PUBLIC HEARINGS ON STATE FUNDING OF SCHOOLS

The Illinois State Board of Education will hold a series of public hearings in October to gather feedback on Illinois public education funding that will inform the board's recommendations to lawmakers for Fiscal Year 2025 and beyond. The first two hearings will take place October 3 and October 5, following by a final hearing October 30.

ISBE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR GREEN RIBBON SCHOOL PROGRAM

ISBE is now accepting applications for the 2023-2024 Green Ribbon Schools Award, recognizing and celebrating Illinois schools' dedication to environmental education and sustainability. The award is sponsored in collaboration with the Illinois Green Alliance and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Applications are due by December 22. Last year's awardees were Prairie Trails School in River Trails District 26 in Mount Prospect and Huntley Community School District 158 in Algonquin.

CHICAGO SCHOOL BOARD REMAP HEARINGS SET

The Senate Special Committee on the Chicago Elected Representative School Board will be meeting again soon to hear testimony on drawing Chicago's school board district map and the "transition process" to a fully elected school board. The hearings will be virtual at ilga.gov on October 3 and October 12. The General Assembly faces an April 2024 deadline to draw Chicago school board districts, which must be consistent with the Illinois Voting Rights Act. That law ensures that districts are crafted in a way that preserves clusters of minority voters if they are of size or cohesion to exert collective electoral power. Currently appointed by the mayor of Chicago, the Chicago Board of Education will transition to become fully elected over the course of a two-year hybrid period.

HOUSE HEARING ON PROFESSIONAL LICENSE DELAYS

The House Health Care Licenses Committee recently heard more than two hours of testimony from healthcare-related entities with concerns about the excessive delays in IDFPR licensing processes. The delays have resulted in people losing jobs, a potential shortage in hospital personnel, and various hardships for licensed persons. The department provided few answers to resolving what IDFPR Secretary Mario Treto characterized as a "crisis" anytime soon. Treto attributed the delays to technological issues and insufficient staffing levels. Unfortunately, IDFPR's months-long effort to procure new licensing software through a joint purchase master contract failed early last week. It appears that the agency did not seek information from vendors or put out a request for proposals prior to deciding to seek a vendor using a master contract. The use of master contracts is common within state government and can result in significant savings for the state if procured appropriately. As a result, the agency will need to restart the procurement process.

The House Health Care Licensing & House Labor and Commerce committees will meet jointly on October 3 in Chicago to discuss healthcare worker staffing ratios.

SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE HEARING ON SOCIAL MEDIA CHILD SAFETY PROPOSAL

Last week The Senate Judiciary Committee met to discuss [Senate Bill 1126](#) (sponsored by Sen. **Sue Rezin**, R-Morris), which creates new regulations for websites and social media aimed at requiring age-appropriate design. Testimony included the impact of social media on children, the impact of the legislation on websites other than social media, and ongoing litigation around this concept. The proposed bill is similar to a California law that was recently held unconstitutional.

UPCOMING WEBINARS ABOUT THE PAID LEAVE FOR ALL WORKERS ACT

The Illinois Department of Labor is hosting several webinars about the Paid Leave for All Workers Act, which will take effect January 1, 2024. IDOL's first webinar is set for October 3 and will provide an overview of the new law and answer compliance questions. IDOL will host an additional webinar October 19.

SUPREME COURT BIPA HEARING

Last week the Illinois Supreme Court heard oral arguments in two cases related to the state's Biometric Information Privacy Act. The cases, brought by nurses, allege that the hospitals they worked at, as well as the manufacturer of medicine cabinets with fingerprint technology, violated BIPA by requiring nurses to use fingerprint scanners to open medicine cabinets. The argument is that the hospitals did not obtain written releases prior to requiring the use of the fingerprint scanners; however, the hospitals claim they believed the use of biometrics to manage medicine falls under an exemption provided in BIPA for healthcare-related operations. Hospitals claim that they would be required to pay hundreds of millions of dollars if BIPA is applied to the healthcare industry.

LOCAL ELECTION AUTHORITIES TRY TO TAMP DOWN MISINFORMATION

Six months before the next presidential primary elections in Illinois, county clerks and other local election authorities are asking for the public's help in stopping misinformation campaigns before they get started. Officials from 25 Illinois counties scheduled a series of news conferences, where they said that accusations of vote tampering and other misinformation campaigns have proliferated in each of the last two presidential election cycles, and they fear it could get worse in 2024.

UAW STRIKE EXPANDS INTO ILLINOIS

The United Auto Workers has expanded its strike against the Big Three automakers to 38 locations at General Motors, Stellantis, and Ford. Among the facilities joining the strike in Illinois are a GM facility in Bolingbrook, a Stellantis facility in Naperville – there are about 100 workers at each facility -- and the Ford plant in Chicago, which has about 4,600 workers.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION WORK PERMIT EXPANSIONS

President **Joe Biden** and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security will expand temporary protected status, including work permits, to thousands of recent Venezuelan asylum seekers in Illinois and across the country. At least 5,000 of the 14,000 asylum seekers in Chicago are from Venezuela, where they faced economic and political turmoil. Reducing wait times for employment approvals and expanding protection status for those coming from Venezuela will get people working.

CHICAGO SIGNS \$29.3 MILLION CONTRACT TO BUILD 'WINTERIZED BASE CAMPS' FOR MIGRANTS

The city of Chicago has signed a \$29.3 million contract with GardaWorld Federal Services LLC for migrant temporary housing. The contract mentions no specific sites for the base camps, nor a specific timetable for erecting the tent cities. Just this week, 27 more buses arrived in Chicago with asylum seekers – the most since they started arriving from Texas in August 2022. The city has now seen more than 15,000 migrants arrive.

SOS RECOMMENDS PERMANENT INCREASE TO DRIVING TEST AGE REQUIREMENT

The Illinois Secretary of State's office is recommending a pandemic-driven state law that raised the minimum age for required behind-the-wheel driving tests for license renewals from 75 to 79 be made permanent. The law raising the age was passed in 2021 and was set to expire October 1. A SOS study showed that the rate of

traffic crashes in Illinois in 2022 involving motorists age 75 and older was nearly identical to the year before, indicating that there is no reason for the state to return to the minimum age of 75 for mandatory road testing.

TROUBLING AUDIT FINDINGS REVEAL ISSUES FOR DCFS AND IDOC

A series of Illinois Auditor General reports reveal ongoing issues at the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Illinois Department of Correction. DCFS's two-year compliance audit ending June 30, 2022 found 33 instances of the department not following procedures and requirements. Those issues include incomplete child welfare files, untimely initiation of child abuse and neglect investigation, and inadequate training programs, among other issues. A similar two-year DOC audit ending June 30, 2022 found 46 findings, including failure to notify victims and law enforcement when sex offenders were released from incarceration. It also found various inadequacies in data reporting and security.

ILLINOIS CLEAN ENERGY JOBS REPORT

The 2023 Clean Jobs Midwest Report showed that Illinois has about 125,000 clean energy jobs. Of those, nearly 14,000 people were employed in clean-vehicle jobs – such as electric vehicle makers Rivian in Normal and Lion Electric near Joliet -- according to Environmental Entrepreneurs, an economic and environmental advocacy group affiliated with the Natural Resources Defense Council. Illinois has the seventh-highest number of jobs in the clean-vehicle sector among all U.S. states. However, Illinois trails several of its Midwest neighbors, led by Michigan, which employed 32,271 people in clean-vehicle jobs, followed by Ohio and Indiana, with about 22,000 each.

DAY CARE CENTERS FACE FUNDING CRISIS

Pandemic-era federal funding that helped stabilize the childcare industry expired September 30, triggering a crisis for providers and the families who depend on them. For Illinois, that could mean nearly 130,000 kids without childcare, about 2,800 shuttered centers, and over 11,300 childcare providers without jobs, according to a study from the Century Foundation, a think tank headquartered in New York. The industry faced collapse as centers had to close due to COVID-19. In response, the federal government provided states \$24 billion to bolster the childcare sector through the American Rescue Plan in 2021.

SECURE CHOICE SMALL EMPLOYER DEADLINE APPROACHING

The Illinois Secure Choice Program requires employers to either provide a private retirement plan or sign up for Secure Choice, which helps employees save for retirement. To date, nearly 129,000 people are signed up. A new deadline is approaching -- employers with between 5 and 15 employees have until November 1 to sign up for Illinois Secure Choice or offer a private retirement plan. Eligible employers can register or request an exemption at www.ilsecurechoice.com.

IDPH WELCOMES CDC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RSV SHOTS

The Illinois Department of Public Health has endorsed the recommendation by the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for the newly FDA-approved RSV vaccine that can be administered during weeks 32 to 36 of pregnancy to protect babies from the virus. This followed recommendations earlier this year for a preventive RSV treatment for infants up to 8 months and toddlers at high risk, and an RSV vaccine for people over 60. If the vaccine is received during pregnancy, infants will be protected and not need the preventive treatment after birth.

STATE ENDS TESTING OF FISH FOR PESTICIDES AFTER PERSISTENT LOW LEVELS FOUND

The state of Illinois will discontinue testing freshwater fish for organochlorine pesticides such as DDT after levels have diminished to nearly zero over the past 50 years. The pesticides were in widespread use in the 1940s but have been banned for agriculture use in the U.S. since 1972. The state has continued to test fish for organochlorine since 1974 because it can build up in the tissue of fish and other animals. Testing for other contaminants in fish, including methylmercury and polychlorinated biphenyls, will not be affected by these changes.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

October 17, 2023

Ahead of the Illinois General Assembly's **fall veto session** on October 24-26 and November 7-9, another division has emerged among Illinois Democrats. Officials (including Gov. JB Pritzker) spoke out in support of Israel and urged a return to peace in the Mideast in response to continuing conflict between the Jewish state and Hamas militants. The Illinois Legislative Jewish Caucus released a statement, signed by 15 members of the General Assembly, urging support of Israel and condemning the violence. Another group of 16 Democratic legislators, including Rep. **Abdelnasser Rashid** (D-Chicago), the first Palestinian-American to serve in the Illinois General Assembly, issued a counter-statement urging de-escalation, peace, and end to the violence in Israel and Gaza. Later, several of those co-signers issued "clarifications" to focus their remarks on condemning the slaughter perpetrated by Hamas terrorists.

Other divisive intraparty issues include whether to extend the Invest in Kids tax credit, expansion and funding of healthcare for undocumented immigrants, providing funding to Chicago for asylum seekers, the gubernatorial veto of legislation to enable nuclear power plant construction, and the gubernatorial veto of legislation providing Ameren with the right of first refusal to build new electric lines.

ICCTA does not have a full picture of what the General Assembly will consider when lawmakers return next week, but it does seem clear that there is little appetite to tackle any super-controversial issues, partly because veto session falls in the middle of petition-gathering season. Incumbents will know if they will be challenged for their seat after the filing period closes on December 4.

Upcoming General Assembly Committee Hearings

- October 17: Joint Committee on Administrative Rules
- October 18: House Ethics & Election Committee on election security
- October 26: Legislative Audit Commission
- November 2: House Judiciary & House Cybersecurity, Data Analytics & IT Committee on emerging issues in artificial intelligence

State Agency Leadership Changes

Recently announced agency transitions will lead to new leadership at all four of the state's healthcare agencies and create two vacancies under the deputy governors. Last month, the Governor announced that **Sol Flores** will depart her role as deputy governor for health and human services on October 13. **Grace Hou**, the current director of the Illinois Department of Human Services, will assume Flores' role after her departure, and **Dulce Quintero** will become acting secretary of DHS.

Theresa Eagleson, director of Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services since January 2019, will step down at the end of this year. Prior to her appointment, Eagleson was the state's longest serving Medicaid director, as well as the executive director of the University of Illinois' System Office of Medicaid Innovation.

Lizzy Whitehorn, currently serving as assistant deputy governor for health and human services, will act as HFS director.

Paula Basta, director of the Illinois Department of Aging, will also retire at the end of the year after serving since March 2019.

Marc Smith, director of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, will step down in December – leaving an agency burdened by systemic failures. Smith has been serving as director since April 2019. The announcement of Smith’s impending departure comes a little more than a week after the state’s auditor general issued a scathing report that cited DCFS’ significant delays in reporting abuse and neglect to local prosecutors, other state agencies and to officials at children’s schools. Smith also steered the agency during a tumultuous period in which a judge held him in contempt of court repeatedly for failing to adequately house children who had been placed in the department’s custody.

Camille Lindsay has been appointed as acting director of professional regulation at the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. She currently serves as first assistant deputy governor for public safety, infrastructure, environment, and energy. Prior to joining the Governor's office, Lindsay served as chief of staff and chief legal counsel for the Illinois Department of Corrections.

Over the next several months, a national search will be conducted to find new directors for DCFS and the Department of Aging. The Governor's Office has not publicly announced who will fill Whitehorn or Lindsay's positions.

DoIT Launches Paid Tech Trainee Program

The Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT) has launched a paid trainee program aimed at building a pipeline of tech talent in partnership with the City Colleges of Chicago and Lincoln Land Community College. Trainees in these programs will receive a minimum yearly salary of \$54,000 from DoIT while pursuing tracks in five high-need concentrations: cybersecurity, networking, coding and database, end user computing, and enterprise infrastructure. Classes will initially begin with 20 participants, with additional cohorts launching as needed in the future.

ISU Faculty Affiliate with UPI

Tenured and tenure-track faculty at Illinois State University have filed to unionize as part of the University Professionals of Illinois, the Illinois Federation of Teachers announced last week. A total of 650 faculty members signed and submitted membership cards with the Illinois Education Labor Relations Board. The United Faculty of ISU are expected to be recognized as a union by December.

COGFA Announces 2024-2025 Minimum Teacher Salary

Pursuant to [Illinois Public Act 103-515](#), the Illinois Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability is required to certify and publish, no later than September 30, 2023, the minimum salary rate for teachers who serve on a full-time basis. For the 2024-2025 school year, the minimum salary is \$41,188. The calculation is based on the minimum salary for the 2023-2024 school year (\$40,000) increased by the percentage equal to the annualized percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (2.97%).

Pritzker Requests Further Federal Action on Asylum Seekers

Gov. Pritzker is asking for more assistance from the federal government in dealing with the ongoing influx of asylum seekers in Illinois cities, which has brought more than 15,000 individuals to Chicago and other urban areas.

Pritzker specifically asked for a waiver of the fees required for individuals seeking temporary protected status after reports surfaced that the cost to obtain a work permit could be as much as \$500 or more. He also requested that the federal government take over the coordination of buses bringing newly arrived immigrants to states and that it begin providing more data to states about the individuals who are arriving and making legal applications to enter the country. In addition, Pritzker's administration has asked for more financial support for states, local governments, and NGOs to provide housing, food, and other services to the asylum seekers; for the federal government to further speed up the timeline for employment authorization for those applying for Temporary Protected Status; and for the federal government to approve Illinois' Medicaid waivers and housing vouchers.

In response to that criticism, **President Joe Biden's** administration acknowledged that it sent a team from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to Chicago "to assess the current migrant situation and identify ways that the city and the federal government can improve efficiencies and maximize resources.

Migrant Crisis Continues to Escalate

Nearly a month after Chicago Mayor **Brandon Johnson** announced plans to move the thousands of migrants being forced to sleep on the floor of police stations and at the city's airports into large tents, Chicago officials have yet to identify a location to build what they call "winterized base camps." The massive tents could shelter, feed, and care for as many as 1,000 migrants in a single location. Johnson and his aides have defended that plan as the best — and only — option available to the city, given the lack of available existing buildings that can be converted quickly into shelters. In all, more than 18,000 people, many fleeing violence and economic collapse in Venezuela, have made their way to Chicago in the past 13 months. All are in the country legally after requesting asylum. City officials expect more than a dozen buses full of migrants paid for by Texas Gov. **Greg Abbott** to arrive in Chicago every day, at all hours, for the foreseeable future. Many are arriving sick and without proper clothing for a Midwestern fall. That has strained the city's social safety net, ballooned the city's budget shortfall, and exacerbated tension between Chicago's Black and Latino communities.

Chicago Mayor Johnson's Budget Address

Mayor Johnson has presented his 2024 budget to the Chicago City Council. A few key takeaways from the \$16.6 billion proposal: Funding for the Chicago Police Department, a key question for Johnson during his campaign and early months as mayor, will not be cut; instead, funding will go up slightly. Johnson also announced that he wants to create nearly 400 civilian positions within the police department. The budget allocates funding for two publicly run mental health facilities and boosts public housing. The mayor committed to hold the line on property taxes and eliminate the automatic escalator that would have increased property taxes to match the rate of inflation. He is also not proposing any increases in home rule taxes or the city's 4.5% hotel room tax. The budget allocates only \$150 million toward managing the migrant crisis — indicating hope for state and federal money to come through.

Midwest Hydrogen Hub Grant

Illinois, Michigan, and Indiana will collectively receive \$1 billion from the U.S. Department of Energy for the creation of a hub that will develop hydrogen as a clean energy source. The Midwest Alliance for Clean Hydrogen, known as MachH2, includes the governors of the three states and dozens of industry and university partners. The 2021 federal infrastructure bill included \$7 billion for the creation of such hubs around the country. The Midwest Hydrogen Hub aims to enable decarbonization efforts through the strategic use of hydrogen in projects such as steel and glass production, power generation, refining, heavy duty transportation, and the creation of sustainable aviation fuel. The hub is expected to create 12,000 jobs through its construction and sustain 1,500 permanent jobs throughout the three states.

House Health Care Licensing & House Labor and Commerce Joint Hearing

On October 3, members of two Illinois House committees (Health Care Licensing and Labor and Commerce) heard more than four hours of testimony related to healthcare staffing ratios. Witnesses from nursing homes and hospitals, including union healthcare workers and representatives from the various organizations representing the industries, focused on the lack of resources to assist patients and systemic underinvestment in facilities. The organizations representing the industry made it clear that they are opposed to additional staffing ratios and explained that Illinois does not have the resources to meet the current requirements, particularly given the shortage of nurses. The Illinois nursing workforce center projects that Illinois will have a shortage of more than 14,400 nurses by 2025.

State Dedicates \$21 Million for CEJA Contractor Incubator Hubs

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is providing \$21 million for the Clean Energy Contract Incubator Program, creating a network of 13 community-based hubs across the state aimed at helping clean energy contractors from underserved communities grow their businesses. The organizations running these hubs will be selected through a competitive process overseen by DCEO. The hubs will provide access to low-cost capital, training, mentorship, networking opportunities and other business assistance. Entities qualified for the funding opportunity include non-profit organizations and public colleges and universities.

State, Local, Federal Agencies Work to Clean Up Following Fatal Ammonia Spill

The Illinois State Police and the National Transportation Safety Board are investigating a major multi-vehicle accident on September 29 that involved a tanker truck carrying 7,500 gallons of anhydrous ammonia, leading to the exposure deaths of five individuals. Several others were hospitalized due to ammonia exposure, including five who were airlifted to area hospitals. Initial reports from the NTSB indicate that the accident may have begun when a vehicle attempted to pass the tanker truck.

Measles Case Reported

The Illinois Department of Public Health is reporting a case of measles in Cook County. The case involves an unvaccinated individual with exposure internationally. IDPH is working with the Cook County Department of Public Health to identify potential exposure locations in the United States. The last measles case in Illinois was identified in 2019.

IDOL Paid Leave for All Workers Act Webinars

The Illinois Department of Labor is hosting several webinars about the Paid Leave for All Workers Act, which will take effect January 1, 2024. The webinar will provide an overview of the new law and answer compliance questions. IDOL will host additional webinars on Thursday, October 19, at 10 AM CT; Wednesday, November 1, at 10 AM CT; and Thursday, November 16, at 2 PM CT. IDOL has compiled a list of FAQs about the Act [HERE](#).

Chicago Eliminates Subminimum Wage for Tipped Workers

Chicago has become the largest U.S. city to independently phase out the subminimum wage for tipped workers. Under existing law, Chicago bars and restaurants can pay tipped workers, such as servers and bartenders, \$9.48 an hour, which is 60% of the full minimum wage of \$15.80. If workers' gratuities do not float their hourly wages above the full minimum wage, restaurants are required to make up the difference, although advocates argue that does not always happen. Under the new law, the gap between the tipped and full minimum wages will shrink 8% each year until the tipped and full minimum wages reach parity in 2028.

Opponents, including the Illinois Restaurant Association, say that the measure will cause restaurants to cut staff, raise menu prices, and close. An earlier version of the proposal would have phased out the subminimum wage over two years instead of five; in a statement, the Restaurant Association referred to the final deal as a "compromise we can accept."

COGFA Report on Wagering

COGFA's 2023 Report on Wagering provides an analysis of gaming in Illinois, including casino gambling, video gaming, the Lottery, horse racing, and sports wagering. In Fiscal Year 2023, Illinois' share of taxes from gaming totaled \$1.992 billion, a 5.1% increase over FY22. Highlights include:

- The largest source of gaming revenues is the Lottery, with \$3.610 billion in sales. More than half (56%) of the sales are from instant games. The Lottery contributed \$726 million to the Common School Fund.
- The adjusted gross receipts for Illinois casinos increased from \$1.308 billion to \$1.430 billion, with growth from all 11 casinos and the opening of new casinos in Waukegan and Danville. Notably, the change in the tax structure on casinos has resulted in less state tax revenue (the average effective tax rate fell from 27.3% in FY20 to 20.1% in FY23), which resulted in less revenue for the Education Assistance Fund than prior years.
- The number of video gaming terminals has increased to over 45,000, with the most in Cook County (8,400) and Springfield (800). Video gaming machines generated over \$2.8 billion in net terminal income in FY23, an increase from FY22, and generated approximately \$141 million in local tax revenues and over \$818 million for the Capital Projects Fund. Despite Chicago not participating, Cook County still has by far the most video gaming terminals of any county.
- Horse racing handle decreased by 14.2% to \$514 million. The racing industry is hopeful that potential "racinos" at their facilities will help rejuvenate an overall struggling industry.
- Sports wagering generated \$949 million in AGR in FY23, with \$142 million in taxes and transferred to the Capital Projects Fund.

CO2 Pipeline Projected on Pause Again

For the second time this year, Omaha-based energy company Navigator CO2 Ventures has hit the pause button on plans to construct a \$3.4 billion, 1,350-mile carbon capture and sequestration pipeline that would cut

through central Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota. In withdrawing its application with the Illinois Commerce Commission to build the proposed 292-mile Illinois portion of the pipeline, Navigator said that it "has elected to reassess the route and other aspects" of the project but intends "to reinstate Illinois permitting, if appropriate," after a full evaluation is complete. The company noted that withdrawal request "is consistent with our recent filings in neighboring jurisdictions."

Attorney General Sues CWLP

Illinois Attorney General **Kwame Raoul** filed a lawsuit against the municipal utility company City, Water, Light, and Power for allegedly releasing more than 700 tons of fly ash into the environment last year. CWLP is owned and operated by the city of Springfield, Illinois and provides drinking water and electricity to Springfield residents.

DCFS Worker Convicted

A DCFS worker has been found guilty of child endangerment, finding the case worker's action were the direct proximate cause of the 2019 death of A.J. Freund. This is believed to be the first time a case worker has been held criminally liable based on work for DCFS. A second person, the case worker's supervisor, was found not guilty.

IDPH Medical Cannabis Report

IDPH has released its 2023 annual medical cannabis report. As of June 30, 2023, there are 138,471 active patients in the Medical Cannabis Patient Registry Program and 1,564 patients enrolled in the Opioid Alternative Pilot Program. The majority of patients qualify based on chronic pain (44.49%) or PTSD (14.92%). A total of 4,990 health care professionals have provided certification for patients. There are 21 medical cannabis cultivation centers and 55 licensed medical dispensaries in Illinois.

Cannabis Sales Up in September

Illinois marijuana retailers sold nearly 3.7 million adult-use cannabis products in September -- more products than any other month since recreational sales launched in the state in January 2020. Consumers spent \$139.5 million this month, the third-highest monthly sales amount since legal markets opened. Of that, \$105.1 million was from in-state residents. Monthly medical marijuana sales totaled \$26.5 million in August. This news is helpful for the Illinois market, which has great difficulty securing capital and competing with non-regulated cannabis-like products that are not subject to the same tax rate or regulations.

Hemp Products Debate

Unregulated Delta-8 hemp products have surged in popularity. A proposed Chicago ordinance (Ald. **Brian Hopkins**) and proposed [House Bill 4161](#) (Rep. **LaShawn Ford**) seek to regulate the industry in competing ways. Ald. Hopkins wants to restrict the sales of hemp products and require sales to be made by licensed marijuana dispensaries, which are regulated by the state and required to test their products. Rep. Ford has an alternate plan; he proposes creating a statewide regulatory structure that regulates the sale of hemp products like cannabis products.

IDPH Launches Enhanced Hospital Report Card

IDPH has launched a redesigned [Illinois Hospital Report Card website](#) that features an updated service map, with county-level information on health outcomes and access to care across Illinois. The Report Card currently tracks over 150 measures for hospitals across Illinois; it also assesses operations of ambulatory surgical treatment centers and allows consumers to obtain information about what services are provided, the cost of those services, patient satisfaction, patient safety, medical complications, and other quality and safety data.

Energy Department Grant to Improve Grid Resiliency

Illinois has received a \$16 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant Program to help the state's municipal and co-op utilities improve power grid reliability and help mitigate the impacts of extreme weather on Illinois families.

Government Officials Cannot Block Critics on Social Media

A federal judge has found that Chicago Ald. **Jim Gardiner** violated the First Amendment by blocking six critics from his official Facebook page in 2021. Gardiner now faces a trial to determine whether he should pay those critics damages. Gardiner allegedly deleted and hid comments voicing opposing political beliefs and even blocked some of those constituents. A federal judge found the actions so overwhelming that a trial on the merits of their claim was not necessary.

NASCAR Returning to Chicago in 2024

NASCAR will return to Chicago on July 6-7, 2024, for Chicago Street Race weekend. In response to concerns raised by residents, the City Council, and other stakeholders, NASCAR has agreed to shorten the event's set up and tear down windows, to address costs incurred by city departments in facilitating and securing the event, and to grow NASCAR's investments in Chicago communities and expand opportunities for small-, minority- and women-owned businesses to participate as vendors. Choose Chicago recently released the results of an economic impact study that showed the race weekend generated \$108.9 million for the local economy, despite heavy rain that canceled the Saturday NASCAR Xfinity Series race and weekend concerts and postponed the main event, Sunday's NASCAR Cup Series race.

IEPA Funding for Water Quality Management Program Projects

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency has announced \$750,000 in funding through the release of a Section 604(b) Water Quality Management Program Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). Grant funds under this program can be used to determine the nature, extent and causes of point and nonpoint source water pollution, develop watershed-based plans, and develop technical and administrative tools to support development and implementation of water pollution control projects and programs.

Public-Private Partnership for Midwestern Climate Investment

Gov. Pritzker and Mayor Johnson have formed the Chicagoland Climate Investment Alliance, aimed at stimulating investments in building decarbonization and secure federal grants for climate-resilient technologies developed in the Midwest. The Alliance's public and private members include World Business Chicago, Invenergy, ComEd, Nicor Gas and Jones Lang Lasalle. It will organize a consortium led by the National Community Investment Fund and submit a proposal to the EPA's Clean Communities Investment Accelerator.

The group will also receive support on federal grants and startup collaborations from several partners, including 1871, the Energy Policy Institute, the Polsky Center at the University of Chicago, and mHUB. The accelerator competition will dole out grants to two to seven nonprofits that will fund community lenders in low-income communities to boost clean technology projects in those areas. The EPA is expected to award those grants in March 2024.

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Illinois Data Breach Lawsuit

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Illinois has been sued for failing to protect health plan members' personal data from hackers. The lawsuit accuses BCBSIL of unauthorized disclosure of personally identifying data including names, dates of birth, group and subscriber numbers, addresses, phone numbers and Social Security numbers between September 19, 2022 and May 18, 2023. The complaint says that it took BCBSIL nearly nine months to discover the data breach and nearly a full year to inform people about it.

Chan Zuckerberg Biohub Chicago Launches

Gov. Pritzker joined leadership from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative for the launch of the Chan Zuckerberg Biohub Chicago, a new biomedical research hub. CZ Biohub Chicago brings together three of Illinois' leading scientific and technology institutions – the University of Chicago, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and Northwestern University to study human tissue with the goal of enabling new therapeutics. Illinois was chosen for the Initiative after a highly competitive year-long application process.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

October 23, 2023

The Illinois General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene tomorrow for the first week of Fall Veto session (**October 24-26**) and return for the second week (**November 7-9**).

The two-week session is intended to act on legislation vetoed by the Governor during the summer. This year, the Governor **vetoed six pieces of legislation**. Lawmakers have three options with each bill. They can choose to accept the veto with a simple majority vote; override the veto with a 2/3 majority vote; or not act on the veto, which would kill the bill. An additional option is to pass new legislation to deal with the issue. The bills under review are:

- Energy Omnibus – [House Bill 3445](#) (Stadelman/Walsh) – Amendatory Veto removes a provision allowing Ameren to have a right of first refusal
- Procurement Legislation -- [HB 2878](#) (Castro/Hoffman) – Amendatory Veto removes authorization for public-private partnerships for local transportation projects
- Property Tax Legislation – [HB 2507](#) (Villanueva/Kifowit) – Amendatory Veto removes property tax break for certain nursing homes
- Removes moratorium on building nuclear power plants – [SB 76](#) (Rezin/Yednock)
- Halal Food in Schools – [HB 3643](#) (Villivalam/Rashid)
- Workplace Privacy Legislation – [Senate Bill 1515](#) (Cervantes/Delgado) **an amendment filed to [SB508](#) deals with this issue*

The General Assembly also uses Veto Session to pass necessary time-sensitive legislation. Both chambers have bills in position for potential consideration. This year, one major issue is whether to extend the **Invest in Kids Act**. Created in 2017, the act allows people to donate to private school scholarship funds and receive a state tax credit up to 75% of their donation. The state caps the program at \$75 million every year, but the act is set to sunset at the end of 2023. Currently, both chambers are negotiating an extension, but it is unclear if the proponents have the necessary votes to pass the legislation. Asked about the program's chances at an unrelated event last Thursday, Gov. **JB Pritzker** said that he would be willing to sign an extension of the program. In response Friday morning, the heads of the state's two largest teachers' unions issued a scathing statement accusing Gov. Pritzker of siding with "anti-public education Republican governors."

Another issue likely to come up during Veto Session is a change to the state's labor laws to allow certain **legislative staffers to unionize**. Last year, a group of employees in House Speaker **Emanuel 'Chris' Welch's** office formed the Illinois Legislative Staff Association to establish a union. Current state law, however, specifically exempts legislative staff from the categories of public employees who are allowed to unionize. In response, Speaker Welch introduced [HB 4148](#), which would eliminate the exemption for most legislative staff and allow them to unionize.

Additional state spending through a **supplemental appropriation bill** is unlikely to be on the agenda for Veto Session – which means the city of Chicago will not receive additional funds to help support some of the 18,500 migrants who have been bussed to Illinois in the past year.

Leader Kelly Burke Not Seeking Re-Election

State Rep. **Kelly Burke**, chair of the House Revenue Committee, has announced that she will not seek another term. Burke has been in the General Assembly for 14 years and helped lead efforts to increase leadership opportunities for women in the House Democratic caucus.

HFS Suspends Enrollment for Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors

The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services has announced that as the Health Benefits for Immigrant Seniors program nears 16,500 individuals, a temporary pause on new enrollees will take effect November 6. The HBIS program provides Medicaid-like health care coverage to individuals aged 65 and older who would be eligible for Medicaid but for their immigration status. HFS also operates the Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults program, which provides similar coverage for individuals age 42-64. Through the end of September, nearly 69,000 individuals are covered across the HBIA and HBIS programs.

Pritzker Delivers Keynote at EV Policy Bootcamp

Gov. Pritzker delivered keynote remarks at the Electrification Coalition's Illinois Medium- and Heavy- Duty Electric Vehicle Policy Bootcamp in Chicago, where he highlighted the state's progress to increase the number of EVs on the road. According to the Governor's office, the number of EVs on the road has increased by 44% in 2023. Additionally, Pritzker's administration has awarded \$12.6 million for the installation of nearly 350 EV fast-charging stations around the state, launched a \$4,000 EV purchase rebate, and partnered with numerous industry partners to bring more EV-related business to the state.

State Offering Tax Relief to Individuals, Businesses Affected by Israel-Gaza Conflict

The state of Illinois will waive penalties and interest on income, withholding, sales, specialty, and excise taxes for certain entities affected by the conflict in Israel and Gaza if they cannot file returns or make timely payments. The waiver applies to returns and payments due between Oct. 7, 2023, and Oct 7, 2024. Eligible entities include individuals whose principal resident or businesses whose primary place of business is in Israel, the West Bank, or Gaza; any individual or business whose books, records, or tax preparer reside in those areas; anyone killed, injured, or taken hostage during the conflict; or any individual affiliated with a government or philanthropic organization assisting the area.

IDFPR Reaches Settlement with Payment Company over Mortgage Errors

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation and with 43 other state agencies have reached a multimillion settlement with payment company ACI Payments after an error in its electronic payment platform resulted in a total of \$2.3 billion in unintentional withdrawals from mortgage-holders. The company faced \$20 million in fines to various state regulators as a result of the error, which left individuals with mortgages serviced by Mr. Cooper (formerly Nationstar Mortgage LLC) with overdrafted bank accounts and/or insufficient funds after ACI's Speedpay service initiated withdrawals that were not scheduled or expected. In response to the error, Illinois Attorney General **Kwame Raoul** and other attorneys general and state regulators sought financial compensation and restitution from ACI Payments.

State Police Leverage Grant to Prevent Vehicle Theft, Hijacking

The Illinois State Police is using a \$10 million grant from the Illinois Secretary of State to bolster its enforcement efforts targeting vehicle theft, hijacking, and related violence. ISP stepped up enforcement during the third quarter of 2023. From July through September 2023, state police recovered 290 stolen/hijacked vehicles; made 24 stolen vehicle arrests; made 3 hijacked vehicle arrests; seized nine firearms as a result of stolen/hijacked vehicles recovered; launched 59 mission targeting stolen/hijacked vehicles and related violent crime; and dispatched 1,245 forensic laboratory assignments related to stolen/hijacked vehicles.

Local Elections Officials Discuss Security, Staffing in House Committee Hearing

Local election officials discussed the need for continued support for security and additional resources for election workers as part of a recent subject matter hearing in the House Ethics and Elections Committee. Lawmakers heard testimony from representatives from the Illinois State Board of Elections, the Chicago Board of Elections, the Rockford Board of Elections, the Illinois Association of County Clerks and Records, and the Tazewell County Clerk's office.

AG: Medicaid Fraud Case Ends in Prison Time

A Cook County judge has sentenced the owner of a medical equipment company and the company's biller to six years in prison after ruling they defrauded more than \$100,000 in Medicaid funds from the state. The Illinois Attorney General's office led the prosecution of **Doreatha Thomas** and **Siobahan Booker** of Olympia Fields, who were accused of using Integrity Medical & Physician Supplies, a medical equipment company, to submit fraudulent Medicaid claims to the state for diabetic supplies that were never provided. In total, Thomas and Booker defrauded the Illinois Medicaid program out of nearly \$685,000.

Secretary of State Extends Parental Leave for Employees

Illinois Secretary of State **Alexi Giannoulias** has signed an executive order expanding his office's paid parental leave policy from four weeks to 12 weeks, which will apply to all of the approximately 4,100 employees. Under the new policy, employees will be able to use their time off intermittently in five-day increments for one year after either adopting or giving birth to a child. The policy applies to both the birth and non-birthing parent. Previously, non-birthing parents were given only two weeks off.

Navigator Cancels CO2 Pipeline

A BlackRock-backed plan to build a 1,350-mile carbon dioxide pipeline spanning five Midwestern states, including Illinois, has been formally cancelled 10 days after withdrawing its application from the Illinois Commerce Commission. Navigator said at the time that it had planned to refile with a new route, but those plans appear to be thwarted.

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

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report

November 13, 2023

*Illinois legislators convened in Springfield for the final week of the fall 2024 veto session last week. They acted on several major initiatives – and left without addressing some others. Both chambers adjourned until **January 16, 2024**, and released calendars for the 2024 Spring Session (click here for the [House](#) calendar and [Senate](#) calendar).*

BILLS THAT PASSED BOTH CHAMBERS DURING VETO SESSION

- [Senate Bill 382](#) (Edly-Allen/Gong-Gershowitz): Deepfake trailer bill to clarify definitions in the Civil Remedies for Nonconsensual Dissemination of Private Sexual Images Act
- [SB 384](#) (Feigenholtz/Moeller): Electric Vehicle Charging Act trailer bill to clarify provisions related to EV-capable parking space requirements and residential requirements
- [SB 385](#) (Belt/Hoffman): Restricts units of local government from enforcing any ordinance that would restrict development of an inoperable state facility conveyed to the unit of local government for recreational purpose
- [SB 584](#) (Cunningham/Didech): Three minor gaming changes
- [SB 690](#) (Castro/Didech): Validates certain tax levies for community mental health boards to ensure local referenda previously passed are effective
- [SB 696](#) (Aquino/Huyhn): Omnibus TIF extension bill
- [SB 765](#) (Harris/Jones): Amends the Farm Mutual Insurance Company Act to provide for catastrophic reinsurance limits
- [SB 950](#) (Bryant/Friess): Quit claim Illinois Department of Corrections property
- [SB 1559](#) (Ford/Lightford): Implements a two-year moratorium on issuing new cannabis transporter licenses. License holders will also have a two-year holiday from paying annual fees.
- [SB 1629](#) (Martwick/Kifowit): Modifies final average salary calculations for Tier 2 Chicago fire fighters
- [SB 1699](#) (Walsh/Cunningham): Energy Omnibus legislation passed in the spring ([House Bill 3445](#)) without the ROFR language amendatorily vetoed by the Governor
- [SB 1769](#) (Ventura/Hoffman): Creates the Government Zero-Emission Vehicle Act
- [SB 1956](#) (Slaughter/Martwick): Grants an annual 3% non-compounded COLA to all Tier 1 Chicago Police retirees who reach age 55 with 20 years of service, effectively removing a birthdate restriction on eligibility
- [SB 1988](#) (Castro/Burke): Clarifies property tax assessment appeal timeline
- [HB 351](#) (Harmon/Tarver): Clarifies what information notaries public must retain for purposes of petitions
- [HB 1358](#) (Glowiak Hilton/Burke): Sunset extension bill
- [HB 2104](#) (Villivalam/Delgado): Adds water safety instruction with respect to safety education for students enrolled in pre-K through 6th grade

- [HB 2394](#) (Glowiak Hilton/Morgan): Expedites the process to enable the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to procure new software to speed up the licensing process for all industries across the state; and enables IDFPD to extend expiration dates or renewal periods if the secretary finds operational need to do so or if it would avoid hardship on a profession's licensees
- [HB 2473](#) (Rezin/Yednock): Ends the moratorium on construction of new nuclear energy plants in the state and addresses concerns that Gov. JB Pritzker had with a similar bill ([SB 76](#)) that he vetoed
- [HB 3641](#) (Joyce/Burke): State government omnibus bill, including an extension for the equal pay provisions for day and temporary labor to April 1, 2024
- The General Assembly also voted to accept the amendatory veto on [HB 2878](#) (Hoffman/Castro), an omnibus procurement bill that, among many other things, would have authorized public-private partnerships for local transportation projects, which the Governor vetoed out of the bill.

MAJOR ISSUES NOT PASSED DURING VETO SESSION

- House Speaker Chris Welch held to an internal rule to require 71 Democratic votes before calling a vote on a bill that would extend the controversial **Invest in Kids** scholarship program, but Democrats were nowhere near that level of support for the plan. Invest in Kids is a scholarship program where low-income kids are sent to private schools using tax-deductible donations to a charity. About 9,500 kids are taking part in the program this year. The program will expire on December 31, 2023.
- An agreement could not be reached on a bill to alter the plan to transition **Chicago Public Schools** from an appointed to an elected school board. Both the House and the Senate passed alternative proposals – neither of which garnered the support of the other chamber. The General Assembly still has until April 1, 2024, to pass a new map for CPS.
- The Senate did not consider legislation passed by the House to enable **legislative staff to unionize**.
- The Senate did not consider the **omnibus property tax legislation** ([SB 2315](#)) passed by the House, which removed language amendatorily vetoed by the Governor out of [HB 2507](#).
- Rather than calling the veto on [HB 3643](#), a bill to create **school options for halal and kosher foods**, the Senate sponsor passed new language on [SB 457](#) over to the House, which did not call the bill for a vote.
- The Senate sponsor for vetoed [SB 1515](#) filed alternative language on [SB 508](#) to add restrictions on the use of the **E-verify system** to ensure privacy for workers. SB 508 passed the Senate but was not called for a vote in the House.

KEY 2024 SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- January 16: First Session Day for the 2nd year of the 103rd General Assembly
- January 19: Deadline – House & Senate Requests to the Legislative Reference Bureau
- February 9: Deadline – Introduction of House & Senate Bills
- February 21: Governor's State of the State/Budget Address
- March 10: Deadline – Senate Bills out of Senate Committee
- March 19: Primary Election
- April 5: Deadline – House Bills out of House Committee
- April 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate Bills in the Senate
- April 19: Deadline – Third Reading House Bills in the House
- May 3: Deadline – House Bills out of Senate Committee & Senate Bills out of House Committee

- May 17: Deadline – Third Reading House Bills in Senate & Senate Bills in House
- May 24: Adjournment
- May 25-31: *Contingent Session Days for the Budget*

CANDIDATE PETITION FILING PERIOD

November 27 is the first day for potential candidates to file nominating petitions for the March 19, 2024, primary election. December 4 is the last day. Candidates have until December 11 to challenge each other's petitions.

STATE RECEIVES CREDIT UPGRADE FROM FITCH RATINGS

All three major ratings agencies now rate Illinois in the "A" category after Fitch Ratings upgraded the state's bond rating from "BBB+" to "A-" on November 7. The upgrade is the ninth that the state has received in just over two years. Credit upgrades generally make it cheaper for the state to borrow money, playing a major role in investors' assessment of risk in buying state bonds. Fitch Ratings cited prudent use of revenue surpluses to the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and Rainy-Day Fund as a reason for the upgrade. It also noted the state's efforts to pay down outstanding debts and eliminate its bill backlog. In addition, Fitch said that the Fiscal Year 2024 state budget supports a continued stable fiscal path.

LOU SANDOVAL CHOSEN TO HEAD ILLINOIS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Lou Sandoval has been named president and CEO of the Illinois Chamber of Commerce after a national search by the organization's board of directors. Sandoval currently serves as president and managing partner of the Halo Advisory Group, working with early-stage, growth companies and Fortune 500 clients. He succeeds longtime Chamber president Todd Maisch, who died earlier this year.

IDVA MONITORING INCREASED COVID-19 LEVELS AT MANTENO VETERANS HOME

The Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs announced November 8 that it is monitoring increased COVID-19 cases at the Manteno Veterans Home. A total of 19 residents and 11 staff tested positive and were experiencing mild symptoms. None have been hospitalized.

NEW FERMILAB QUANTUM RESEARCH LAB OPENS

Fermilab opened a new Superconducting Quantum Materials and System Centers Garage in Batavia. The garage is one of five U.S. Department of Energy National Quantum Information Science Research Centers. As one of the largest quantum research facilities in the world, it will bring together experts from across the world to collaborate on quantum technology projects. The 6,800-acre campus will serve as the home for a collaboration of over 50 counties and a consortium of 90 research facilities, including the University of Chicago. The Pritzker administration has invested \$200 million in the Chicago Quantum Exchange through the Rebuild Illinois capital plan. Illinois is the only state in the nation to house two National Quantum Labs. Fermilab and the Argonne National Laboratory were each selected by the U.S. Department of Energy to receive a \$115 million grant as part of the federal program.

NEW GRANT TO FUND ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROJECTS IN AREAS OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONCERN

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency announced that the Residential Energy Efficiency Trust Fund Grant Program – previously known as the Low-Income Residential Energy Efficiency Program or LIREE -- has up to \$5,000,000 in funding available for energy efficiency upgrades at single family or duplex residential properties. The Energy Efficiency Trust Fund Grant Program will benefit residents receiving housing assistance from a state or federal housing assistance program located in areas of environmental justice concern. Eligible applicants include public housing authorities, units of local government (municipalities, counties, or townships), or nonprofit organizations. Examples of eligible projects include window replacement, heating and cooling equipment retrofits, and lighting upgrades. Total project costs may range from \$25,000 - \$500,000, with a match requirement subject to total funding request.

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ICCTA Government Relations and Public Policy Report December 6, 2023

After a week-long filing period, candidates have submitted their petitions to appear on the March 19, 2024, primary ballot for 17 U.S. House of Representatives seats, 23 of the 59 state Senate seats, all 118 Illinois General Assembly seats, and 77 judicial vacancies.

Candidates in line at the Illinois State Board of Elections office by 8 AM on the first day of the filing period, November 27, will be put into a lottery drawing for placement at the top of the ballot. Some candidates wait to file on the last day of filing, December 4 between 4 and 5 PM, for a chance to be in another lottery for placement in the last spot of the ballot list. The lottery is scheduled for December 13.

After filing, there is a period for candidates to challenge the signatures of opponents in an attempt to knock them off the ballot. Candidates have until December 11 to file their challenges. The March 19 primary ballot will be certified in January.

Lawmakers will return to Springfield for the second year of the 103rd Illinois General Assembly on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024.**

KEY 2024 SESSION DATES FOR THE 103RD ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- January 16: First Session Day for the 2nd year of the 103rd General Assembly
- January 19: Deadline – House & Senate Requests to the Legislative Reference Bureau
- February 9: Deadline – Introduction of House & Senate Bills
- February 21: Governor's State of the State/Budget Address
- March 10: Deadline – Senate Bills out of Senate Committee
- March 19: Primary Election
- April 5: Deadline – House Bills out of House Committee
- April 12: Deadline – Third Reading Senate Bills in the Senate
- April 19: Deadline – Third Reading House Bills in the House
- May 2: ICCTA Lobby Day
- May 3: Deadline – House Bills out of Senate Committee & Senate Bills out of House Committee
- May 17: Deadline – Third Reading House Bills in Senate & Senate Bills in House
- May 24: Adjournment
- May 25-31: *Contingent Session Days for the Budget*

CANDIDATE FILINGS – WHO FILED FOR WHICH OFFICE?

Several Illinois Congressional Reps are facing primary challenges: Reps. **Danny Davis**, **Sean Casten**, **Bill Foster**, **Jesus ‘Chuy’ Garcia**, **Jan Schakowsky**, **Mike Quigley**, and **Mike Bost**.

Rep. **Mike Marron** (R-Fithian) will resign effective December 18 to become CEO/President of Vermilion Advantage, an economic development organization that is also the local chamber of commerce. He had already announced he would not seek re-election. Rep. **John Egofske** (R-Lemont), who also previously announced he would not run again, announced he will resign on December 8. Egofske replaced former House Leader **Jim Durkin** and will continue to serve as mayor of Lemont. **Nicole La Ha Zwiernan** could end up being appointed to fill Egofske’s vacancy as she is the only Republican who filed to run for the seat.

It appears there could be about two dozen competitive state House races next November. House Democrats have candidates running in every Republican-held district where President Joe Biden won in 2020 -- that includes GOP Reps. **Amy Grant**, **Jennifer Sanalistro**, **Martin McLaughlin**, **Kevin Schmidt**, **Steven Reick**, and **Dan Ugaste**. House Democrats will also challenge GOP Reps. **Jackie Haas**, **Jeff Keicher**, and **Mike Coffey**. The House Republicans, in turn, will try to flip the seats held by retiring Rep. **Lance Yednock** and freshman Rep. **Sharon Chung**. Several incumbents in both parties will face primary challengers.

None of the seats held by Senate Republicans won by Biden in 2020 are on the ballot next year. Biden won Sen. **Patrick Joyce’s** (D-Kankakee) district by 6 points, and he will face Republican **Philip Nagel** in a rematch of 2022. Joyce also has a primary opponent. The Senate GOP hope to challenge as many as six Democrats – all of which were won by Joe Biden in 2020: **Joyce**, **Michael Hastings**, **Steve Stadelman**, **Rachel Ventura** (Biden won this district by 20 points), **Dave Koehler**, and **Paul Faraci** (Biden won this district by 27 points). From the Democrat caucus, Sen. **Natalie Toro** (D-Chicago), appointed to replace Sen. **Cristina Pacione-Zayas**, will face the fiercest primary challenge from **Garciela Guzman** in addition to two other candidates, **Geary Yonker** and **Dave Nayak**. From the Republican caucus, Sen. **Terri Bryant** (R-Murphysboro) will be challenged in the primary by well-funded **Wesley Kash**.

ILLINOIS INCREASES FY24 REVENUE ESTIMATE

Gov. **JB Pritzker’s** budgeting office has raised its current-year revenue estimate by \$1.4 billion. It now expects the state to collect \$52 billion in general revenues, up from \$50.6 billion when lawmakers approved the state’s budget in May. That number was published in the annual five-year fiscal and economic forecast from the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget one-third of the way through the fiscal year. The main reasons for the increase were the continued growth in income and sales tax receipts. Revenues will also get a boost because of the state’s failures in the previous two years to properly apply for federal matching funds. That will result in a one-time \$405 million boost as the state collects the funds retroactively.

The report also found another \$1 billion in “spending pressures” that may require approval of a supplemental spending plan when lawmakers return to Springfield in January 2024. Those pressures include assistance for asylum seekers, increased caseloads at the Illinois Department on Aging and the Illinois Department of Human Services, delays in other federal reimbursements, increased group insurance costs, and outstanding technology bills. The proposed supplemental spending, plus an expected \$198 million contribution to the state’s “rainy day fund,” leaves the anticipated Fiscal Year 2024 surplus at about \$422 million.

REDESIGNED FAFSA FORM AIMS TO INCREASE NUMBER OF PELL GRANT RECIPIENTS

New data from the U.S. Department of Education estimate an increase in Pell Grant recipients and an increase in the number of maximum Pell Grant awards after the launch of the redesigned 2024–25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid form. The department called the new form “simplified” and “streamlined.” Starting with the 2024–25 award year, the FAFSA form will also include updates to student aid calculations, linking eligibility to family size and the federal poverty level. These changes will significantly expand access to federal student aid. State-by-state data estimate an increase of 21,917 Pell Grant recipients and 52,902 maximum Pell Grant awards in Illinois after the launch of the redesigned FAFSA form, which the department said would be available to students and parents by Sunday, December 31.

ILLINOIS COMMERCE COMMISSION CUTS GAS UTILITIES RATE HIKE REQUESTS

The Illinois Commerce Commission has issued a series of decisions on requests from natural gas utilities, approving rate increases significantly lower than utility companies requested. Regulators cut Ameren Illinois's initial rate requests by 50.8%, Nicor's request by 30.3%, Peoples Gas' request by 25%, and North Shore Gas' request by 34%. In each case, the Commission also approved a Return on Equity percentage lower than what was requested by the utilities. The ICC regulators reached these conclusions in each case as part of an 11-month legal proceeding, closely scrutinizing the utilities' rate case filings.

IDOC CELEBRATES NORTHWESTERN PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAM'S INAUGURAL GRADUATING CLASS

Stateville Correctional Center recently hosted a graduation ceremony for 16 students who earned their Bachelor of Science degrees in Social Sciences through an educational partnership with Northwestern Prison Education Program. The students were presented with diplomas during the history-making ceremony inside Stateville's theater, attended by family and friends of the students, Northwestern faculty, Illinois Department of Corrections leadership, government officials, and current NPEP students. The commencement marked the first cohort of individuals in custody in the United States to graduate with a bachelor's degree from a major university.

Launched in 2018, NPEP was the first program to offer a comprehensive, degree-granting liberal arts curriculum to incarcerated students in Illinois. In partnership with Oakton College and IDOC, NPEP offers an Associate of General Studies degree conferred by Oakton. Upon completion of this degree, students are eligible to apply to Northwestern University for a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in social sciences from Northwestern's School of Professional Studies. Northwestern admitted this inaugural class of NPEP students in January 2022 after they completed coursework required to receive associate degrees from Oakton.

MORE FUNDS FOR JOB TRAINING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity announced an additional \$13 million investment in the Job Training and Economic Development Program for workforce training and wrap-around services that will bolster equitable workforce recovery for Illinoisans struggling to gain meaningful employment. As part of Illinois' workforce recovery efforts, JTED grants focus on helping increase employment among workers and industries hardest hit by COVID-19. Grantees will be selected through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity process.

IL SUPREME COURT HEARS CHALLENGE TO 2019 MUNICIPAL PENSION CONSOLIDATION

The Illinois Supreme Court heard arguments in a case challenging the 2019 Pension Consolidation Act, which consolidated nearly 650 individual police and firefighter pension funds into two. The case revolves not around whether the consolidation of 249 individual police and firefighter pension funds into two large statewide funds have yielded worse financial returns; they haven't. Rather, nearly three dozen retirees and 17 of the small funds argue that fund members' voting power was diluted, and that they no longer have the influence they once had over voting in those who control the pension investments. An attorney for the plaintiffs argued Illinois' ironclad pension protection clause — which the state's high court has reaffirmed over and over — extends to members' voting rights. During oral arguments, justices seemed skeptical.

MAJOR IL SUPREME COURT RULINGS

The Illinois Supreme Court has issued a series of rulings on hot-button cases, finding that the state's biometric privacy law does not cover health care workers in specific situations, and that the Freedom of Information Act does not apply to Firearm Owner Identification Card records. Those were just two of 17 rulings handed down by the court last week.

BIPA

In the case of *Mosby v. Ingalls Memorial Hospital*, the justices ruled unanimously that biometric data used by health care workers to access patient medication via fingerprint-enable medication storage cabinets are not covered under the state's Biometric Information Privacy Act. The case involved a pair of nurses who sued their employer, Ingalls Memorial Hospital in Harvey, alleging their use of the medication storage cabinets violated BIPA. Despite rulings by lower courts to the contrary, the Supreme Court found that the law included a plain-language exclusion for the use of biometric data to protect medication and supplies because of regulations laid out in the federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

FOIA

In the case of *Hart v. Illinois State Police*, the court ruled unanimously that the state's Freedom of Information Act does not apply to records regarding FOID cards. The case involved individuals who used FOIA to request copies of letters explaining why they were denied FOID cards or had their cards revoked. In 2011, lawmakers passed an amendment to the state FOIA specifically exempting "names and information" of people who have applied or received FOID cards.

The Supreme Court found that lower courts erred in their interpretation that the amended law allowed individuals to use FOIA to request their own information. In the opinion, Justice Joy Cunningham wrote that individuals can still request their information through other methods, but that FOIA is "not the proper means" to obtain this information.

Auto Insurance

Another unanimous decision came in the case of *Galarza v. Direct Auto Insurance Company*, where the court ruled that pedestrians and bicyclists with insurance who are struck by an uninsured vehicle driver or in a hit-and-run are entitled to coverage from their insurance companies.

PRITZKER ANNOUNCES PLAN TO IMPROVE ASYLUM SEEKER EMERGENCY RESPONSE

IDHS is investing \$160 million to provide intake, shelter, and wraparound services to the more than 24,000 migrants and asylum seekers in the Chicago area as winter weather approaches. The state, alongside local partners, has identified several “bottlenecks” causing delays in the effort to settle asylum seekers and deliver services, including the initial intake at landing sites, access to shelter, and the transition to independent living. Of the \$160 million, \$30 million will be invested in an intake center to coordinate new arrivals with all levels of government and community-based organizations, \$65 million will help Chicago launch a winterized soft shelter site providing temporary housing for up to 2,000 people for six months, and \$65 million will expand wraparound services to enable new arrivals to live independently as they await asylum hearings. This announcement builds on \$478 million in state funding that has been provided or committed to the asylum seeker response over FY 2023 and 2024. In addition to funding, some policy changes will occur related to shelter stay duration and intensified case management and housing assistance.

CHICAGO CITY COUNCIL APPROVES \$16.6B BUDGET

Mayor **Brandon Johnson**’s \$16.6 billion budget was approved by the Chicago City Council by a vote of 41-9. The 2024 budget does not raise property taxes and, in addition to \$150 million dedicated to addressing the migrant crisis, re-establishes the city’s Department of Environment with a \$1.8 billion budget, includes plans to begin reopening city mental health clinics and expand mental health services, and civilianizes 398 positions in the Chicago Police Department. Johnson’s budget also increases funding for the Office of Labor Standards and creates an Office for Re-Entry and a council Subcommittee on Reparations.

COOK COUNTY BOARD APPROVES \$9.26B BUDGET

The Cook County Board of Commissioners has unanimously approved a \$9.26 billion annual budget for 2024. Commissioners approved a budget with almost two dozen amendments to Board President Toni Preckwinkle’s original proposal. Amendments included additional funding for maternal health, oral and dental staff within Cook County Health, and a new disaster response fund that next year will help care for migrants.

STATE LAUNCHES WORK ON SHELTER SITES FOR ASYLUM SEEKERS

IDHS has begun construction on a new asylum shelter sites in Chicago. The brick-and-mortar site in Little Village will house up to 2,200 asylum seekers in total. The location of the shelter was identified by the city of Chicago and will operate as part of the city’s existing shelter system. Work to construct and operate the shelter is being funded by the state through the Pritzker administration’s recently announced \$160 million investment to improve the asylum seeker pipeline as well as the \$478 million in state funding that has been provided or committed to the asylum seeker response over state fiscal year 2023 and 2024. The Little Village shelter site is expected to open and begin housing asylum seekers as early as mid-December. A proposed base camp at Brighton Park has been placed on hold due to an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency report of contaminated soil (including mercury and arsenic) at the site.

IOWA-ILLINOIS CARBON DIOXIDE PIPELINE APPLICATION WITHDRAWN

Plans for a pipeline that would have transported carbon dioxide from Iowa for eventual storage in central Illinois are off the table for now. The pipeline, which would have connected two Archer Daniels Midland plants in Iowa and transported CO₂ to a site near the company’s headquarters in Decatur, faced stiff opposition from

the public as well as a recommendation to deny the permit from ICC staff. Wolf Carbon Solutions, the company behind the proposed project, filed a motion with state regulators to withdraw its application, although Wolf's president has stated that the company intends to file a new application in the future.

CEJA EQUITABLE ENERGY FUTURE GRANTS

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has announced \$25.5 million in funding for the Equitable Energy Future Grants Program as part of a larger strategy to equitably grow the clean energy workforce in Illinois. The program supports renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in low-income and historically disadvantaged communities. Grantees will be selected through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity process. Qualified entities include equity eligible contractors and independent contractors, non-profits, co-operatives that are majority-owned by equity eligible persons, and businesses or non-profits with a proposed project that meets equity building criteria.

STATE OFFERING \$25 MILLION IN B2B GRANTS FOR NEW BUSINESSES

Businesses launched during the pandemic that were not eligible for state or federal funding are now eligible for [\\$25 million in Back-to-Business grants](#) as part of the NewBiz program. These businesses now have from November 30, 2023 through January 11, 2024 to apply for NewBiz funds.

FEDERAL DISASTER DECLARATION APPROVED FOR COOK COUNTY FLOODING

President **Joe Biden** has approved a federal disaster declaration allowing residents of Cook County hit by September's severe storms and flooding to seek individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Individual assistance includes grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-interest loans for uninsured losses, and additional resources. The September 17 storms produced heavy rainfall and flash flooding that caused widespread property and infrastructure damage.

SECRETARY OF STATE DEBUTS MONARCH BUTTERFLY LICENSE PLATE

Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias has announced that the Monarch Butterfly Specialty License Plate is now available for drivers who have reserved it. Created by the General Assembly in 2016, the Monarch Butterfly specialty license plate supports protection for the endangered species' habitats. The Monarch Butterfly is the Illinois state insect.

In 2016, state lawmakers introduced a universal license plate system to cut down on the number of specialty license plates on the road. New specialty license plates would only be created if they received more than 2,000 deposits that benefit an organization or charity. The Monarch plate received its necessary deposits in 2018, but the plate was never created, until now. The \$10 deposits for the plate go to support the Roadside Monarch Habitat Fund, which is part of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. If renewed, \$24 of the universal special license plate renewal fee will benefit the fund.

ISP NAMES REBECCA HOOKS FIRST FEMALE FIRST DEPUTY DIRECTOR

The Illinois State Police has promoted **Rebecca Hooks** from Lieutenant Colonel to First Deputy Director, second-in-command to Director **Brendan Kelley**. Hooks is the first female to achieve this position within the ISP since its creation in 1922.

IDOT RECEIVES \$4.5 MILLION FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY GRANT

The Illinois Department of Transportation has received a \$4.5 million grant from the Federal Highway Administration to improve safety and modernize future infrastructure. Illinois was one of 10 states selected from 35 applicants. The funding will be used to create a digital information-sharing network for upcoming projects that lessens reliance on paper reports, take full advantage of 3D modeling and aerial surveying, and improve communication with local agencies. As part of the Rebuild Illinois Capital Plan, IDOT plans to improve more than 3,000 miles of highway and almost 10 million square feet of bridges over the next six years.

IDOI REACCREDITED BY NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INSURANCE COMMISSIONERS

Following a rigorous on-site review, the Illinois Department of Insurance announced its reaccreditation by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, the membership organization for state DOIs that sets insurance regulatory standards for all U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories. IDOI has received NAIC accreditation ongoing since 1993. IDOI regulates approximately 344 domestic and 1,401 foreign insurance companies, and more than 77,036 in-state and 211,419 out of state insurance producers.

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR SUBPOENAS U.S. STEEL OVER WORKER LAYOFFS

The Illinois Department of Labor issued a subpoena to the United States Steel Corporation as part of an investigation into whether or not the company violated state law with its recent idle production at its Granite City facility. Earlier in the week, U.S. Steel said previously announced layoffs at the facility would be expanded and that the plant, which staffs more than 1,000 workers, would be shut down indefinitely. IDOL is investigating U.S. Steel's compliance with the Illinois Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, which requires employers with 75 or more employees to give at least 60 days advanced notice of a plant closing or a mass layoff. U.S. Steel announced in September its intention to temporarily idle work at one of its two Granite City blast furnaces for six months, resulting in 400 temporary layoffs. That closure has been extended indefinitely and more than 600 additional permanent layoffs were announced.

ISP LAUNCHES PUBLIC CORRUPTION ONLINE REPORTING TOOL

Illinoisans who witness examples of public corruption can now report their allegations directly to the ISP via an online form. Members of the public can use the form to report instances of embezzlement, steering contracts in exchange for kickbacks, overbilling contractors, and more to ISP's Special Investigations Unit.

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

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