

SESSION UPDATE

Illinois Community College Trustees Association

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Illinois is celebrating 200 years of statehood in 2018. Since the Illinois General Assembly meets in two-year sessions, we are just starting the second year of the 100th General Assembly. During the first year (2017), we saw the end of the longest budget standoff in Illinois' history. This was accomplished over the veto of Gov. Bruce Rauner. The vote to override the Governor's veto included several Republicans in the Illinois House of Representatives. This partially explains why we are seeing an unusually large number of retirements and resignations by Representatives and Senators. While some members are running for a different office, and some are retiring after long careers, many are not running for re-election because of the toxic environment in Springfield.

During the second year of the 100th General Assembly, we will see an emphasis on the 2018 elections. All State Representatives, 39 Senators, and all statewide officers are up for election. The primary is March 20 and promises to be interesting. Seven Democrats filed for the nomination for Governor, and eight filed for the nomination for Attorney General. Additionally, there are far more primaries than usual in both parties. The large number of incumbents leaving office creates open seats, which attract multiple candidates.

Even the legislative calendar is skewed toward the primary. The House and Senate are only scheduled to be in session for four days each in the month of March. Most of the real legislative action will take place in the months of April and May, with the House scheduled to be in session for 33 days during those two months, and the Senate scheduled to be in session for 34 days.

School funding continues to be a major issue, as the Governor recently vetoed a bill addressing the distribution of some of the funds appropriated to K-12 schools in last year's budget. Will the General Assembly be able to pass a budget in 2018? Will the budget be balanced? Will the budget be limited to 6 months in order to get past the November election? While the temperatures outside are cold, the politics of Illinois are warming up.

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