**Session in Limbo: COVID-19 Illinois Updates**

The Illinois House has cancelled session days scheduled for next week. This announcement follows last week’s decision by both chambers to cancel session this week, and a decision by the Secretary of State to limit access to the Capitol Building for most groups in response to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Illinois and throughout the nation.

House members have been advised by the Speaker that the situation is in flux, and that members should be prepared to return to Springfield to address urgent matters, including during the weeks of April 5 and 12th which were originally scheduled as the legislative spring break. Previously scheduled deadlines will be moved back in order to accommodate the unanticipated break in session.

While nothing has been confirmed, there is speculation that the General Assembly may reconvene at some point in the near future to take up emergency measures related to the COVID-19 outbreak in Illinois and any other legislation deemed “critical.” If and when the legislature meets in Springfield it is expected that access to the Capitol will be limited to legislators and essential staff only.

A listing of additional cancellations, closures, policy changes and extensions is compiled below.

* The Illinois Commerce Commission will institute a moratorium on utility disconnections for non-payment.
* The City of Chicago has temporarily suspended debt collection, issuance of non-safety citations and impounds and will waive penalties for late payment.
* For State of Illinois employees, critical staff will continue to report. Other staff will work from home, and the remainder will be “on-call.”
* All non-essential state agency travel is halted.
* Staff for the four legislative caucuses are largely working remotely and access to James R. Thompson Center in Chicago is restricted to persons who have business with the state for the next month.
* All Secretary of State facilities are closed effective March 17. Expiration dates for drivers licenses, State ID cards and vehicle registrations are automatically extended for 30 days.
* All visits to Illinois Department of Corrections facilities are halted until further notice. A number of county jails have followed suit and are restricting visits to inmates.
* Illinois bars and restaurants are closed to in-person patrons from close of business March 16th until March 30 . Drive through and carry-out remains open.
* Illinois K-12 schools are closed until March 30th.
* The majority of public and private Illinois colleges and universities will transition to online instruction, some, including the University of Illinois will do so for the remainder of the spring semester.
* A number of courts, including Cook County, have suspended court operations and postponed cases in response to advice from the Illinois Supreme Court.
* The Office of the Attorney General will operate with a reduced staff.
* The Illinois Department of Natural Resources closed all state parks, fish and wildlife areas, recreational areas, and historic sites as well as the cancellation of upcoming scheduled events. There is no date set for re-opening.
* The Office of the Illinois Treasurer is closed after a worker at a Springfield office tested positive for the virus.
* The Illinois Comptroller’s office is open and operating with minimum critical staff only. All other staff is working from home.
* Illinois Gaming Board suspended operations of the State’s casinos for 14 days starting Monday. Video gaming is shut down until the end of the month.