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**Illinois Updates – December 4, 2020**

Madigan Fights to Retain Leadership

In spite of growing resistance to his re-election as Speaker, Michael J. Madigan has assumed an aggressive stance in his efforts to retain control the House of Representatives. The number of House Democrats indicating they will not support Madigan grew from a handful to nearly twenty following new indictments in the U.S. Attorney’s bribery case against Commonwealth Edison last month. This week, Majority Conference Chair Kathleen Willis (D-Northlake) became the first member of Madigan’s leadership team to say she would not support his reelection as Speaker. In her statement, Willis called for a more collaborative approach to leadership in the chamber, which has been controlled by Madigan for all but two years since 1983.

In July, ComEd entered into a deferred prosecution agreement with federal authorities to end an ongoing investigation of the company. The federal government’s investigation centered on the utility’s use of hiring, contracts and other practices intended to gain favor with the Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives in exchange for favorable consideration of legislation to benefit the company valued at $150 million. In November, four individuals with ties to Speaker Madigan were indicted: former ComEd CEO Anne Prammagiore and former ComEd lobbyists Mike McClain, John Hooker and Jay Doherty. All four plead not guilty during their arraignment December 2, 2020 in Chicago.

In a related development, the Illinois House Black Caucus announced on Thursday that they would hold a virtual candidate forum for members wishing to be considered for Speaker on Saturday, December 5. Both Madigan and Representative Stephanie Kifowit (D-Aurora) have said they will participate in the forum. It is expected that the Black Caucus will endorse Madigan for another term as Speaker following the forum, but one member, Maurice West (D-Rockford) has previously said he will not support Madigan for another term.

Harmon Re-Elected for Full Term as Senate President

The Senate Democrat Caucus voted to elect current President Don Harmon (D-Oak Park) to a full term as president for the upcoming 102nd General Assembly. Harmon was elected one year ago to fill out the term of retiring President John Cullerton after a contentious leadership battle with Senate Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford. In contrast from the previous election, this year Lightford nominated Harmon for President and is likely to continue in her position as Majority Leader.

Parkhurst Steps Down

Rep. Lindsay Parkhurst (R-79, Kankakee) resigned from the House of Representatives this week. Parkhurst has served since 2017. She opted not to run for reelection to the General Assembly and instead successfully ran for circuit court judge. Republican Jackie Haas defeated Democrat Charlene Eads for the open seat in the 79th District, and Haas may be appointed to fill out the remainder of Parkhurst’s term.

Lawmakers Look at LaSalle Outbreak

Multiple legislators are calling for answers related to the coronavirus outbreak at the LaSalle Veterans Home. The facility has been the site of over 200 positive cases, and thirty-one residents of the facility have perished in the Covid outbreak. Rep. Andre Thapedi (D-Chicago), chair of the House Judiciary-Civil Law Committee has called for an investigation of the outbreak, citing it as a civil legal matter. The House investigation follows an announcement last week by the Pritzker Administration that the Illinois Department of Human Services’ inspector general would lead an investigation on behalf of the administration.

The call for investigations follows a virtual hearing of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee on November 24 that found that insufficient safety and health protocols contributed to the rash of cases. Republican senators Sue Rezin (Morris) and Paul Schimpf (Waterloo) have asked for additional hearings, claiming that more information in needed beyond what was presented at the hearing. In the House, Rep. Stephanie Kifowit (D-Aurora), chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee called on the Speaker to organize an in-person subject matter hearing of the committee to look at causes and responses to the outbreak.

COVID-19 Updates

The Illinois Department of Public Health today is reporting 10,526 new confirmed or probable cases of Covid-19. IDPH reports 148 additional deaths, and 5,453 hospitalizations of which 1,153 are in intensive care. The state’s positivity rate is 12.1 percent, and the entire state is currently under Tier 3 mitigations according to the Restore Illinois Plan. These restrictions include no indoor restaurant or bar service and limits on the size of gatherings among other precautions.

In light of the continuing surge of coronavirus cases, the Illinois Secretary of State announced today that driver services facilities would remain closed through January 4, 2021. Illinois residents can access the following SOS services online at [www.cyberdriveillinois.com](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com):

* Renewing a license plate sticker;
* Renewing a valid driver’s license for qualifying drivers;
* Renewing a valid ID card for those age 22-64 (seniors 65 and older have free, non-expiring IDs);
* Obtaining a driver record abstract;
* Filing Business Services documents, such as incorporations and annual reports.

Customers with issues involving administrative hearings may contact adminhearings@ilsos.gov. Some select driver services facilities will remain open to serve new drivers only.

**Illinois COVID-19 Resources**

* State of Illinois: <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov>
* Illinois House Republican Caucus: <https://ilcovid19info.com>
* Chicago residents can access information about the city’s response to the outbreak by texting “covid19” to 78015, or visiting the city’s dedicated webpage at <https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/sites/covid-19/home.html>
* A list of public and private testing sites can be found on the IDPH website at <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/testing>.

**Dates to Remember**

* January 14, 2021 – Inauguration of the 102nd General Assembly