**Illinois Updates – March 22, 2024**

Primary Saw Low Turnout, Few Surprises

Voter turnout was low across the state on Tuesday, particularly in the City of Chicago, which saw 15 percent of registered voters participating. Former President Donald Trump and President Joe Biden won their respective primaries. The Bring Chicago Home ballot initiative to fund homelessness services through a real estate tax failed, another blow to beleaguered Mayor Brandon Johnson. Challenger Mariyana Spyropoulos defeated Incumbent Cook County Circuit Clerk Iris Martinez with the backing of the Cook County Democratic Party. Below are the results of selected Congressional and legislative primaries:

* 4th Congressional District – Democratic Primary -Incumbent Jesus “Chuy” Garcia defeated Alderman Ray Lopez.
* 7th Congressional District – Democratic Primary -Incumbent Danny Davis held off Chicago City Treasurer Melissa Conyears-Ervin and activist Kina Collins.
* 12th Congressional District – Republican Primary - Incumbent Mike Bost hung on to beat former State Senator and gubernatorial candidate Darren Bailey.
* 20th Senate District – Democratic Primary -Graciela Guzman defeated appointed State Senator Natalie Toro in what was an extremely expensive campaign for the Senate Democratic organization.
* 37th Senate District – Republican Primary – Li Arellano, former Dixon mayor edged out Tim Yager and Chris Bishop.
* 40th Senate District – Democratic Primary - Senator Patrick Joyce easily defeated Kimberly Earling.
* 53rd Senate District – Republican Primary - Chris Balkema won a four-way contest, overcoming Mike Kirkton, Jesse Faber and Susan Wynn Bence.
* 58th Senate District – Republican Primary – Incumbent Teri Bryant easily handled opponent Wesley Kash in a costly downstate contest.
* 31st House District – Democratic Primary – Mike Crawford took out 40-year incumbent Mary Flowers helped by generous financing from labor unions and House Speaker Chris Welch.
* 36th House District - Democratic Primary – Attorney Rick Ryan held off Sonia Khalil for the seat currently held by Democratic Leader Kelly Burke.
* 76th House District- Democratic Primary -Amy “Murri” Briel defeated Cohen Barnes for the seat held by Representative Lance Yednock.
* 88th House District – Republican Primary – ADM heiress Regan Deering defeated Chuck Erickson for the seat currently held by Representative Dan Caulkins.
* Freedom Caucus members Blaine Wilhour (110th), Brad Halbrook (107th) and Adam Niemerg (102nd) were able to win their respective Republican primaries. Halbrook faced Marsha Webb, Wilhour was opposed by IEA recruit Matt Hall, and Niemerg won his write-in campaign against IEA-backed Jim Acklin. On the flip side, incumbent Representative Dave Severin (116th) defeated Angela Evans, who had the backing of the Freedom Caucus.

Welch Appoints Teacher Shortage Working Group

House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch announced Thursday the formation of a legislative working group to look at the state’s teacher shortage. Citing several recent legislative initiatives including simplifying and lowering licensure fees, passage of a minimum salary of $40,000 and of an evidence-based funding formula, Welch said that the working group must build on that foundation to support teachers. Despite these efforts, shortages persist, and the educator pipeline has not met need. Members of the working group are Rep. Katie Stuart, Rep. Harry Benton, Rep. Sharon Chung, Rep. Fred Crespo, Rep. Will Davis, Rep. Laura Faver Dias, Rep. Michelle Mussman, Rep. Aaron Ortiz and Rep. Sue Scherer.

Pritzker Takes Business Junket to California

Governor JB Pritzker will spend five days in California promoting Illinois to the state’s business community and film industry. The Governor is expected to tout the Illinois Film Tax Credit and the state’s investment in manufacturing and quantum computing. In addition to supporting economic development, Pritzker will also do fundraising for his Think Big America initiative which focuses on protecting and expanding abortion rights throughout the country. The Governor was born in California and has maintained close ties to political and business leaders in the state. His spokesperson said that he did not plan to meet with Governor Gavin Newsom during the trip.

Guidice Resigns from Johnson Administration

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson’s Chief of Staff Rich Guidice announced his resignation just two days after the general primary. Guidice had a long and respected career at City Hall, and his selection as COS eased concerns of more moderate interests over the election of progressive Johnson. Guidice said in his announcement he was leaving city government for another job, which he did not identify. The resignation comes at a critical time for the administration, who had counted on Guidice’s experience during the upcoming Democratic National Convention this summer. Chief Operating Officer John Roberson and Deputy Chief of Staff and former Senator Christina Pacione-Zayas are considered front runners to replace Guidice.

Pretrial Appellate Task Force Issues Report

The Pretrial Appellate Task Force has issued its report and recommendations regarding ways to streamline appeals under the Pretrial Fairness Act. The Illinois Supreme Court established the task force in January in response to the volume of appeals filed to pretrial detention decisions made at the circuit court level. Under the Pretrial Fairness Act, appeals of pretrial rulings have seen a 268-fold increase, prompting the Supreme Court to look at ways to simplify and clarify the process. The amendments to court procedures recommended by the task force are intended to address volume while still allowing for meaningful review of these decisions. The task force included representatives of the Office of the State’s Attorney Appellate Prosecutor, the State Appellate Defender, the Attorney General, appellate judges and state’s attorneys. The revised procedures will take effect April 15, 2024.

Migrant Evictions Still Fluid

Eviction of migrants from Chicago shelters was supposed to begin last week, but it appears few asylum seekers left facilities as the city continues to struggle with its migrant response. The initial plan would move as many as 2,000 migrants, mostly men, out of three shelters located in Woodlawn, North Elston Avenue and the Gage Park Fieldhouse. Only a handful of people left, with others scheduled for eviction receiving case-specific exemptions. Mayor Brandon Johnson made statements that evictions would incentivize independence and that those seeking asylum do not come to the United States to live in temporary shelters. Critics of the mayor’s approach include Alderman Andre’ Vasquez, who is calling for greater transparency regarding the handling of migrant movements and says that evictions will only add to the city’s homelessness problem. Evictions of families with children will be delayed until summer.

Governor Issues EO Targeting Rare Disease Treatments

Governor JB Pritzker issued an executive order on Monday creating an advisory council to look at access and costs for rare disease treatments, including treatments for sickle cell disease. The Advisory Council on Financing and Access to Sickle Cell Disease Treatment and Other High-Cost Drugs and Treatment will be a 20-member task force charged with looking at issues surrounding treatments for sickle cell and other rare diseases and making recommendations to the Governor and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services regarding financing models to ensure that patients covered by the state’s Medicaid program can access needed medications. Medicaid covers 50% of Illinois’ sickle cell patients. The advisory council will include appointees representing the sickle cell and rare disease communities.

Recent Gubernatorial Appointments

Governor JB Pritzker has made appointments to the following boards and commissions:

* Erika Allen is reappointed to the Illinois Committee for Agricultural Education.

All appointments are subject to Senate confirmation.

Upcoming Meetings and Hearings

* March 28, 2024 – House Appropriations – Higher Education Committee – Subject Matter: Procurement in Higher Education
* April 16, 2024 – Joint Committee on Administrative Rules

Election Calendar

* November 5, 2024 – General Election

Dates to Remember

* April 5, 2024 – House Committee deadline
* April 12, 2024 – Senate Third Reading deadline
* April 19, 2024 – House Third Reading deadline
* May 3, 2024 – Committee deadline for bills from other chamber, House and Senate
* May 17, 2024 – Third Reading deadline for bills from other chamber, House and Senate
* May 24, 2024 - Adjournment