**Illinois Updates – April 21, 2023**

Johnson Speaks to Joint Session

Chicago Mayor-Elect Brandon Johnson traveled to Springfield Wednesday where he addressed a joint session of the General Assembly. Joint sessions are a rare honor; besides the Governor the last time it was done was when then President Obama addressed the General Assembly during his final months in office.

In his remarks to lawmakers, Johnson voiced support for full funding of the Local Government Distributive Fund, increasing the current distribution of 6 percent to the statutory amount of 10 percent over the next four years. He also suggested revisions to the state’s school aid formula. Throughout the speech Johnson called for unity, emphasizing that policies to benefit the state’s largest city need not come at the expense of the rest of the state.

In a related development, Johnson announced the hiring of two key staff. City Hall veteran Rich Guidice will serve as Chief of Staff. Guidice previously served in the Daley Administration and more recently has led the Office of Emergency Management. State Senator Cristina Pacione-Zayas will likely step down from her Senate seat to serve as Deputy Chief of Staff. Prior to her appointment to the Senate in 2020 Pacione-Zayas worked for the Erikson Institute. The mayor-elect and Chicago City Council members will be sworn into office on May 15, 2023.

ComEd Trial Winds Down

The trial of four former Commonwealth Edison employees entered it final stages this week. Perhaps the most jarring testimony came last week from longtime 13th Ward political operative and former Cook County Recorder of Deeds Ed Moody. Moody testified regarding his long association with former Speaker Michael J. Madigan, primarily performing political work at his behest. During his testimony, jurors heard Moody describe a conversation with the Speaker that made it clear that contractual payments from ComEd were dependent on maintaining his political activities.

After the prosecution completed their work the defense began their testimony, including from defendants Anne Prammagiore, former CEO of the company and long-time lobbyist John Hooker. The defense sought to demonstrate that the defendants did not believe that the favors offered to former House Speaker Madigan would necessarily result in the outcomes desired by the utility and therefore do not constitute bribery. The judge has stipulated however that proof of quid pro quo is not necessary for conviction.

After six weeks of testimony and cross examination of more than fifty witnesses, attorneys for three of the defendants rested their case on Wednesday. Thursday will be reserved for jury instruction, and jurors will hear closing arguments on Monday. If convicted, the Court must impose reasonable sentences under federal statutes and the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines.

Medicaid Funding Shortfall Identified

As state budget officials work to craft a final FY 2024 state budget, an emerging budgetary pressure has raised concerns. Actuarial estimates regarding participation in the expansion of Medicaid to undocumented immigrants fell far short of actual numbers, leaving an approximately $800 million shortfall in the program budget. Because coverage for undocumented individuals does not qualify for federal match, the additional spending would require use of the state’s General Revenue Fund. Additionally, the Department of Healthcare and Family Services, which administers Medicaid, is also facing calls to increase payments to providers and expand the undocumented program to additional age groups. As the budgeteers work to address the unexpected liability, Republican leadership in the House have filed a resolution calling for an immediate moratorium on the enrollment of new beneficiaries and calling on the State Auditor General to perform an audit on the program.

Meet the Lawmakers

Each week we will profile two new members of the 103rd General Assembly. This week we meet Representative Mary Gill (D-35, Chicago) ad Representative Hoan Huynh (D-13, Chicago).

Representative Gill was recently appointed to her seat, replacing former Rep. Fran Hurley who resigned to accept an appointment to the Illinois Labor Relations Board. She is the Executive Director of the Mt. Greenwood Community and Business Association and is a former teacher and Special Olympics volunteer. Gill was selected from many candidates interest in the appointment.

Representative Huynh has a bachelor’s degree for Yale University and a master’s degree from Harvard University. Huynh is a former investment advisor for the social impact investment firm, but will serve as a full-time legislator. He replaced former House Majority Leader Greg Harris who opted not to run for reelection. Huynh is the first Vietnamese refugee to serve in the Illinois General Assembly.

Dates to Remember

* April 28, 2023 – Senate and House Committee deadline, bills from other chamber
* May 11, 2023 – Senate Third Reading deadline, House bills
* May 12, 2023 – House Third Reading deadline, Senate bills
* May 19, 2023 – Scheduled Adjournment