**Illinois Updates – April 29, 2022**

FY 2023 Budget

Governor JB Pritzker along with Senate President Don Harmon and House Speaker Chris Welch announced an agreed budget on April 7, 2022, one day prior to scheduled adjournment. The $45.6 fiscal year 2023 billion spending plan, supported by stronger than anticipated revenue growth, includes $1.83 billion in tax relief for voters heading into the 2022 primary and general election. The tax relief measures include:

* Freezing a scheduled increase in the state’s motor fuel tax for six months;
* Suspending the 1 percent sales tax on groceries for one year;
* Property tax rebate for homeowners of $300 per household;
* Permanent expansion of the state’s Earned Income Tax Credit for low and middle-class residents;
* Direct payments to taxpayers of $50 per person and $100 per child;
* Back-to-School tax holiday

The budget proposal also includes $200 million in additional payments toward the state’s pension obligations, a $ 1 billion payment into the Rainy Day Fund, and $200 million to support public safety and law enforcement. Republican lawmakers decried the budget as being filled with gimmicks to draw support from voters and voiced support to make some of these same temporary tax breaks permanent.

The FY 2023 budget includes $12 billion for elementary and secondary education, $9 million for human services and $2 billion in public safety spending. The budget takes effect July 1, 2022.

Law Enforcement and Public Safety

House and Senate Democratic majorities passed several measures in the final days of the spring 2022 legislative session intended to support law enforcement agencies and promote public safety. Bills that were approved by lawmakers include:

* $200 million in appropriations to fund efforts to recruit and retain police officers and funding for police cameras;
* Legislation to create a program to help first responders secure evening and overnight childcare;
* A bill to expand the use of highway cameras throughout the state;
* Legislation to authorize a state council to provide grants to law enforcement agencies to address the increase in carjackings as well as legislation to protect victims of theft from any penalties or tickets assessed against a stolen vehicle;
* A comprehensive bill intended to address organized retail crime;
* Legislation to ban the sale and possession of guns created from kits, or “ghost guns” that do not have a serial number;
* Trailer legislation to last year’s criminal justice reform legislation to clarify provisions regarding electronic monitoring of detainees.

Appellate Court Weighs in on Covid Lawsuit

An Illinois Appellate Court ruled last week in favor of Chicago Public Schools, upholding the district’s authority to take action against employees who refuse to follow COVID-19 protocols. While CPS has dropped its requirement for face coverings it is still requiring COVID testing for some employees. The ruling reverses a previous court ruling issued by a Sangamon County circuit judge that found mandatory masking and testing violated the authority granted to the state in statute.

The appellate court’s action was just the latest development in an ongoing legal battle regarding the use of COVID-19 mitigation efforts in elementary and secondary schools. Earlier this spring the Illinois Supreme Court said they would not overturn the circuit and appellate court rulings against the school mask mandate, effectively ending the Governor’s authority to require face coverings. Governor JB Pritzker ended the state’s mandate for masks in school in early March at the same time the mandate ended for places of business.

Illinois Gets Another Credit Upgrade

Moody’s upgraded the state’s credit rating last Thursday, the second upgrade the bond rating agency has given Illinois over the past year. Bond ratings are used by investors to gauge the risk of investing in bonds issued by a unit of government and are also used by lenders to assess a government’s ability to borrow and repay debt. Citing continued revenue growth and contributions to the state’s Rainy Day Fund, Moody’s gave the state a rating of Baa1. While upgrades show improvement, Illinois still claims the lowest bond rating of any state in the country.

Dates to Remember

* June 28, 2022 – Illinois General Primary Election
* November 8, 2022 – Illinois General Election