**Illinois Updates – July 16, 2021**

LIG Pope Announces Resignation

Legislative Inspector General Carol Pope announced on Wednesday that she would be stepping down from the position before the end of the year. Pope has served as inspector general since December of 2018. In her letter of resignation, Pope expressed frustration with the restrictions placed on the position by the General Assembly, stating “This past legislative session demonstrated true ethics reform is not a priority” adding “The LIG has no real power to effect change or shine a light on ethics violations. The position is essentially a paper tiger.” While the General Assembly passed an ethics reform measure this spring, it did not include specific powers requested by Pope including the ability to issue subpoenas and to launch legislative investigations in the absence of a formal complaint. Comments from legislators regarding the resignation fell mostly along party lines, with Democrat lawmakers defending the ethics bill and Republicans agreeing with Pope’s criticisms. The position of Legislative Inspector General was created to investigate wrongdoing by legislators and staff. Pope is the third appointee to resign from the position since its inception.

Judges Hear Redistricting Case

Court action began this week in a consolidated suit alleging that the new legislative maps drawn by Democrat lawmakers are unconstitutional. As required by federal law, a panel of three judges heard from attorneys representing the state Republican legislative leaders and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF). Both groups had filed suit separately based on the argument that the maps approved by the Democrat-majority legislature are unconstitutional since they are not based on actual census numbers. Because census numbers will not be available until August, Democrat lawmakers used data from the American Community Survey and past election results as the basis of their maps.

Republicans and MALDEF have combined their suits in hopes that the federal justices will uphold their arguments. In question is the timeframe for the lawsuits given that the Illinois Constitution requires that maps be submitted by June 30 in the year following the decennial census. Democrats have defended the legitimacy of the maps, pointing out that the constitution is silent on what data can be used to draw legislative maps, although similar cases filed in other states have supported use of census numbers. It is unclear when the panel will rule in the case.

Political Outlook for Pritzker is Positive

U.S. News & World Report had some good news for Governor JB Pritzker this week. In an article forecasting upcoming gubernatorial races around the country, the publication deemed Pritzker “currently not vulnerable.” Factors cited in the Governor’s favor include his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, economic gains made by the state over the past two years, and Pritzker’s substantial personal fortune. Three Republicans have announced their intent to run in the 2022 primary for the chance to take on the sitting governor: current state Senator and former Representative Darren Bailey of Louisville, former state senator Paul Schimpf of Waterloo, and businessman Gary Rabine of Schaumburg. State lawmakers pushed the general primary back from March 15, 2022 to June 28, 2022 this spring in order to allow congressional maps to be drawn using delayed census data.

Dates to Remember

* October 19-21, 26-26 – Veto Session