**Illinois Updates – August 27, 2021**

Redistricting Hearings Begin

The joint House and Senate Redistricting Committee began a series of hearings this Thursday to collect input from stakeholders on revised legislative maps. The hearings will run through the weekend and be completed before the two chambers convene in special session on Tuesday, August 31st for the purpose of legislation related to redistricting. The release of numbers from the 2020 U.S. Census this month will require adjustments to the legislative maps approved by Democrat legislators during the spring session. Analysis of the census data compared to the legislative maps shows that deviation from median population requirements for district size will require adjustments to meet constitutional requirements.

At Thursday’s hearing, organizations representing minority communities and voting rights groups asked lawmakers to slow down the process to allow for greater transparency and provide additional information from census figures regarding the ethnic makeup of communities. These groups, along with House and Senate Republicans have decried the process that produced the first set of maps and have filed suit to nullify the maps.

Senate members and staff were instructed to obtain a COVID-19 test prior to Tuesday’s session. While both chambers currently have the ability to vote remotely, House Speaker Chris Welch strongly encouraged his members to participate in person to prevent any legal challenges to action on the revised legislative maps.

COVID Updates

Governor JB Pritzker issued a new face covering mandate on Thursday that will require face coverings or masks to be worn indoors, regardless of vaccination status. The Governor’s order follows a similar order issued by Mayor Lori Lightfoot for the City of Chicago last week. Along with the mask mandate, Pritzker will require all state employees working in congregate settings to be vaccinated or perform weekly covid-19 testing, as well as employees in Pre-K through 12 educational settings, institutions of higher education, college and university students and healthcare workers.

In announcing the new mitigations, the Governor cited increasing rates of positivity, hospitalization and use of ICU beds. The masking requirement takes effect on Monday, August 30th and the vaccination requirement becomes effective September 5, 2021. Response from labor organizations representing employees impacted by the mandates have been mixed. AFSCME Council 31, which represents the largest number of state employees has wanted any vaccination requirements to be negotiated. SIEU Healthcare Illinois, which represents 90,000 healthcare and educational employees has come out in support of the mandate.

Governor Pritzker also extended the state’s eviction moratorium to September 18, 2021. While the U.S. Supreme Court has issued a ruling that effectively ends the federal CDC eviction moratorium, states and units of local government may continue to grant additional time to renters impacted by the pandemic at their own discretion.

Dates to Remember

* August 31 – Special Session on Redistricting
* October 19-21, 26-26 – Veto Session