**Illinois Updates – September 22, 2022**

Pritzker Calls for Resignation of Hastings and Jones

Governor JB Pritzker issued a public statement this week calling for the resignations of Sen. Emil Jones, III (D-Chicago) and Sen. Michael Hastings (D-Frankfort). Pritzker’s recommendation regarding Jones came shortly after he was indicted by federal authorities this week on charges of bribery for accepting payment from a red light camera manufacturer. Jones’ indictment is related to a wide-ranging investigation of Safe Speed LLC, which also resulted in charges against the late Sen. Martin Sandoval. Senate President Don Harmon had asked that Jones resign his position in Senate leadership as well as his position as a committee chair.

In the case of Hastings, the call for resignation is related to multiple allegations of abuse and bullying against his estranged wife, a former district office employee and a statehouse lobbyist. When the accusations by his wife became public several weeks ago, Harmon asked Hastings to resign his leadership position, which Hastings agreed to on a “temporary basis.” Since those accusations became public, an environmental lobbyist has come forward to publicly call for Hastings’ resignation, citing a pattern of threatening behavior by the Senator. It was also made public that state funds were used to settle a lawsuit by a former employee for discrimination based on race, sex and disability. The suit was settled at a cost of over $100,000 to the state including paying Hastings’ attorney fees. A spokesman for Hastings has issued a statement that he denies the accusations against him and does not plan to resign his seat.

Downstate Ready to Assist with Migrants

Downstate immigration advocates and the Illinois Municipal League are strategizing how to address migrants arriving in Illinois from Texas. The New American Welcome Center, an immigration advocacy group in Champaign-Urbana says they anticipate up to 1,000 migrants per week may travel through Illinois during the remainder of 2022. The Center cited Governor’s JB Pritzker’s disaster proclamation as an important tool in equipping Illinois communities to meet the needs of asylum seekers. A disaster proclamation allows for coordination between state, county and municipal governments and will allow Pritzker to deploy the Illinois National Guard for assistance.

In addition to advocates, the Illinois Municipal League has begun to discuss logistics and response to the influx of immigrants with its member municipalities, including how to provide shelter and services. In Chicago, Catholic Charities is providing case management services to connect individuals and families with needed services.

SAFE-T Act in Crosshairs

Criminal justice reform legislation known as the SAFE-T Act is under fire by Republican legislators and State’s Attorneys as its January 1, 2023 effective date approaches. The legislation included policing reforms, updated use of force guidelines and requires law enforcement to use body cameras. The most controversial aspect of the bill is the elimination of cash bail or bond, which will begin on January 1. Illinois is the first state in the nation to totally eliminate cash bail, but opponents believe the law as passed is unclear on what offenses will be considered detainable under the new process. State’s Attorneys in Will, McHenry and Kankakee County have filed lawsuits against the SAFE-T Act, claiming it violates the authority granted to the judicial branch in the Illinois Constitution. Proponents of the reform measure have accused opponents of misrepresenting what the bill does and using the act to score political points prior to the November general election. Supporters of the legislation have acknowledged that the bill may require additional changes and clarification prior to January 1, 2023, including Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul. A trailer bill to the SAFE-T Act may be voted on during the upcoming fall Veto Session.

Supreme Court Rules on Legislator Pay Case

The Supreme Court this week overturned a lower court’s ruling that would have paid two former state senators for statutory pay increases that they claim they should have received during their terms of office. Former Democratic State Senators Michael Noland and James Clayborne filed suit in circuit court in 2017 claiming that bills to eliminate automatic pay increases for legislators that they voted for while in the Illinois Senate were in fact unconstitutional. In their suit, they requested compensation for the amounts they would have received had the automatic increases taken place, which totaled approximately $170,000. The plaintiffs also sought to extend the claim for legislators who were not party to the case, which could have cost the state $10 million in payments.

State Comptroller Susana Mendoza has refused to make the payments to Noland and Clayborne based on the “Laches” legal doctrine which asserts the former lawmakers waited too long to make their claim. In a unanimous bipartisan decision this week, the state’s highest court agreed with Comptroller Mendoza that the Laches defense was upheld. Mendoza thanked the Illinois Attorney General for their role in assisting with the defense of the case.

Dates to Remember

* November 8, 2022 – Illinois General Election
* November 15-17, November 29-December 1, 2022 – Veto Session
* January 4-10, 2023 – Tentative “Lame Duck” Session, 102nd General Assembly
* January 11, 2023 - Inauguration of the 103rd General Assembly