**Illinois Updates – September 9, 2022**

Garcia Considers Mayoral Bid

Congressman Jesus “Chuy” Garcia revealed that he may once again consider running for Mayor of Chicago. At a press conference this week, Garcia said he was mulling a run, but would not commit to a timeline for making a final decision. Garcia also said he viewed his role in Congress as especially important given recent political unrest in the country. If he decides to run, he will be joining a crowded field of declared and possible candidates who seek to replace Mayor Lori Lightfoot, who is seeking reelection.

Declared candidates include Chicago City Council members Ray Lopez, Sophia King and Roderick Sawyer, State Representative Kam Buckner, former Chicago Public Schools CEO Paul Vallas and wealthy Chicago business owner Willie Wilson. In addition to those who have officially entered the race, several past and present elected officials are weighing a run, including Chicago City Treasurer Melissa Conyears-Ervin, State Representative LaShawn Ford, and Cook County Board of Commissioners member Brandon Johnson. The non-partisan mayoral election will be held February 28, 2023. If no candidate receives a majority of votes, a run-off election will be held on April 4, 2023.

Questions Raised Regarding Choate

News articles published in conjunction by Capitol News Illinois, Lee Enterprises and ProPublica shed light on a troubling pattern of mistreatment, abuse and neglect of residents of Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center. Located in the downstate community of Anna, Choate is a 270-bed facility serving adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental illness. The center also houses a unit of individuals deemed unfit to serve criminal sentences due to intellectual disability or unfit by reason of insanity. The article detailed at least 26 arrests of employees over the past ten years for mistreatment of residents, as well as many internal investigations of abuse that have not been completed or proven.

Arc of Illinois, an advocacy group for the developmentally disabled has called on the State of Illinois to close the facility and instead house residents in group homes. Governor JB Pritzker expressed concern regarding the reports of abuse and said that he would not rule out closure if merited. As a major employer in the Anna community, previous calls to close Choate have faced intense political pushback.

Tentative “Lame Duck” Schedule in Place

House and Senate Democratic leadership have advised their caucus members to hold the dates of January 1-January 10, 2023 for potential additional session days in the current 102nd General Assembly. Typically referred to as “lame duck” session, the General Assembly schedules days after the election, when there will be multiple “lame duck” legislators who lost their election or did not run for reelection. Historically, these legislators vote differently on bills since they are not returning to Springfield, often tipping the scales on particularly controversial subjects. Additionally, legislation passed after January 1, 2023 with an immediate effective date only require a simple majority, rather than a 3/5 majority if enacted prior to January 1. Bill topics that may be considered include abortion rights and gun laws. The 103rd General Assembly will be sworn into office on Wednesday, January 11, 2023.

Trump Jr. to Speak Downstate

The Williamson County Republican Central Committee announced that Donald Trump Jr. would be the keynote speaker for an event to be held October 8th in Marion. Trump Jr. often serves as a proxy for his father, former President Donald Trump. Republican gubernatorial candidate Darren Bailey declined to say whether he would attend the event. The former president endorsed his candidacy shortly before the June primary, which Bailey won with almost 60% of the votes in a crowded primary field.

Dates to Remember

* November 8, 2022 – Illinois General Election
* November 15-17, November 29-December 1, 2022 – Veto Session
* January 11, 2023 - Inauguration of the 103rd General Assembly