



Illinois State Association of Counties

POSITION STATEMENT

January 6, 2022

ELECTION OF COUNTY BOARD CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

SUPPORT

Unless the county board chairperson is elected by voters in a countywide election, the chairperson is selected by members of the county board.

Current Law:

Under the Illinois Counties Code, a county board member is elected chairperson by his or her peers on the county board during the first meeting in the month following the month in which county board members are elected. The duration of the chairperson's term is 2 years. A simple majority of the board present at the meeting is sufficient to elect the chairperson. The vice-chairperson is elected by the same process.

The method for replacing a county chairperson is different depending on how the vacancy occurred. If a county board chairperson vacates his or her role as chair through resignation or death, then the vice-chairperson assumes the role of chairperson for the balance of the chairperson's term without the need for the board to hold an election for the position. However, when a chairperson is removed from that position by a four-fifths vote of the county board, the vice-chair assumes the responsibilities of chairperson only until a new chairperson is elected at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Proposed Change:

The General Assembly and Governor should amend the Illinois Counties Code to require that county board chairpersons and vice-chairpersons be elected by a majority of those elected to the board rather than the lower threshold of a majority of those who happen to be present at the meeting when the election occurs.

The bill would further require that a county board elect a new chairperson before the end of the prior chairperson's term regardless of how a vacancy is created. This is preferable to maintaining an inconsistent policy that requires a vote of the county board to immediately replace the chairperson (vacancy created following removal by the board) while allowing a vice-chairperson to complete the term of the chairperson without a vote of the county board (vacancy created by resignation or death). This would create more consistency in how these vacancies are filled.

The changes being proposed would apply to the 85 counties under township organization but would not impact any county where the chairperson is elected directly by voters.

INCREASE BOARD MEMBER INPUT IN THE SELECTION OF COUNTY BOARD LEADERSHIP.