

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

2021

WINTER



05 2021 ILLINOIS COUNTY ACTION PROGRAM



ID NEWLY-ELECTED HOUSE AND SENATE LEADERS



2021 Illinois County ACTION PROGRAM

Counties Count!

isacoil.org

A Message from the President



By: Deborah Sims, Cook County Commissioner

Becoming involved with organizations that support the work I do as an elected official has been extremely beneficial to me and my constituents during my career in public service.

I've been involved in the National Association of Counties (NACo) since 1995 and have served on various committees. As an active NACo member, I have consistently encouraged my peers in Cook County government to get involved as well. What they will learn and the people they will meet along the way will benefit them as individual leaders as well as the County because of what they will bring back to share with others.

Getting involved in our state county association is even more important because we, as Illinois county officials, can combine our knowledge, expertise and networks to strengthen counties within our State. This is the reason a group of Illinois county officials created the Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo).

ISACo serves as a forum to improve county government by identifying needs and solutions. We strive to provide a united voice for counties while recognizing and respecting that different regions of the state sometimes have different needs and perspectives. ISACo works to respect and balance these differences while pursuing state and federal policies that benefit counties generally.

I'm thrilled to see the growth we have experienced since ISACo was created in 2018. We began with 11 counties and are now comprised of 26 member counties. Over 80% of the State's population resides within an ISACo member county!

If your county is not already a member of ISACo, I urge that you discuss becoming a member today. Information about membership can be found on ISACo's website at www.isacoil.org/membership. I'm confident you will discover that our dues structure is reasonable and the benefits of banding together with other counties,

particularly to influence state and federal laws and regulations, far exceeds the investment.

I also encourage your county to join NACo if not already a member. NACo and ISACo work in tandem to support the important work you do as a county official.

In closing, I want to announce some changes to ISACo's Board of Directors. During our March 11, 2021, Board of Directors meeting we welcomed two new members to the Board. DuPage County Chairman Dan Cronin and Lake County Chairwoman Sandy Hart were elected in December 2020 to join Will County Board Member Denise Winfrey in representing the Collar Counties during the 2021-2022 term. Kendall County Circuit Clerk Matt Prochaska was selected by the ISACo Board of Directors on March 11 to serve as the Association's Vice President. Congratulations to each of them and I look forward to the successes we will achieve together over the next two years.

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A Message from the Executive Director

By: Joe McCoy, Executive Director

It's difficult to think of a more appropriate word to describe 2020 than "disruptive."

COVID-19 disrupted commerce, government, education, social activities, sporting events, political campaigning, relationships and many aspects of our day-to-day lives. Each of us were compelled to adopt alternative ways of doing things that allowed for remote work and social distancing. While certainly temporary, this new reality will remain with us through some, if not all, of 2021.

The work of the Illinois General Assembly was disrupted when the legislature cancelled the preponderance of its spring session days in 2020 and only returned for a handful of days at the end of May. Both the House and Senate implemented social distancing strategies that allowed each chamber to conduct essential state business. including the passage and enactment of a state budget. The 2020 fall veto session was also cancelled, but both chambers convened for a few days in January 2021 to work on several issues in the final days of the 101st General Assembly.

Considering the significant fiscal and governance challenges facing the State, it's heartening to know the General Assembly will convene in Springfield this year. The 2021 spring legislative session won't quite resemble typical sessions of the past because of the ongoing threat posed by the pandemic. Progress doesn't always occur in a straight line!

Legislative leaders are developing strategies to welcome state legislators back to Springfield while promoting social distancing measures. This means limited public access to the capitol building, more virtual committee hearings, new procedures for taking testimony and restricted access to the House and Senate Floors.

I'm pleased to report that ISACo will be moving forward with our state legislative agenda in 2021. This agenda, known as the Illinois County Action Program (ICAP), was finalized and approved by our Board of Directors in December 2020 and includes several bills that legislators will introduce on our behalf. More information about the ICAP is available in this edition of the *County Quarterly*.

In addition to information about our 2021 legislative agenda, this *County Quarterly* highlights our recently-launched bill tracking feature that will help counties stay on top of legislation that could potentially affect county governments. ISACo's bill tracking feature is the latest service we are pleased to offer our member counties.

Like all of you, we remain optimistic that each day that passes brings us one day closer to the resumption of normalcy.

New Address:



427 E. Monroe Suite 200 Springfield, IL 62701



As always, please feel welcome to contact me at (217) 679-3368 or jmccoy@isacoil.org if I can be of assistance. It is an honor to serve you. Thanks. **County Quarterly Newsletter**

ISACo's 2021

Legislative Program

By: ISACo Staff

A core mission of ISACo is to provide robust legislative representation for counties at the state and federal levels of government. Sustained and credible advocacy is important for implementing solutions to county problems while preventing harmful impacts from legislation detrimental to county government.

This *County Quarterly* newsletter includes ISACo's 2021 state legislative agenda, otherwise known as the Illinois County Action Program (ICAP). This year's ICAP includes 14 issues approved for introduction in the General Assembly by ISACo's Board of Directors.

The ICAP proposals, however, represent but one component of our overall agenda. We also review all introduced bills, identify which are of interest to counties and decide what, if any, positions ISACo should take on those bills as they are considered by legislators. This process allows us to focus our advocacy on legislation that matters to counties and educate the General Assembly as to their impact. ISACo positions are guided by our Board-approved *ISACo County Platform.* This document is available on our website at <u>www.isacoil.org</u>. When a position isn't readily apparent, ISACo staff looks to our Legislative Committee, ISACo Caucuses and Board of Directors for guidance.

Part and parcel of a successful legislative advocacy program is informative and consistent communication with our members.

ISACo's new website, launched in December 2020, includes a "tracked bill" functionality intended for the exclusive use by officials and staff within our member counties. The "tracked bill" list includes every introduced bill of interest to counties. Users can organize and view these bills by number, category, whether they would impose a state mandate, preempt local authority or reduce local revenues. Officials in each member county will receive an invitation from ISACo to register and access this valuable resource. Please contact us if you have not yet received this invitation.

Our weekly *News and Views* e-newsletter provides useful information for county officials and other interested parties. This includes updates on state and federal legislative issues and how county officials can participate in the process to influence favorable legislative outcomes.

While we frequently ask our member counties to advocate directly with their area legislators, ISACo retains the services of two different lobbying firms to represent counties at the State Capitol and in Washington, DC. The costs to retain these lobbyists is spread over our member counties, resulting in tremendous value for ISACo members. We also have a registered lobbyist on staff.

Please contact Executive Director Joe McCoy at <u>jmccoy@isacoil.org</u> if you have any questions about our legislative advocacy program or if you are interested in becoming more involved.

2021 Illinois County Action Program

The following legislative proposals have been approved for introduction and pursuit in 2021 by the Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) Board of Directors.

EXPAND LOCAL OPTION MOTOR FUEL TAX (MFT) TO ALL NON-HOME RULE COUNTIES

PROBLEM

The only non-home rule counties permitted to impose a county MFT are DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will. These counties are permitted to impose an MFT not to exceed 8 cents per gallon following passage of an ordinance or resolution by the county board. Cook County imposes an MFT using its home rule authority. PROPOSAL

Expand authority to impose a county MFT not to exceed 8 cents per gallon to all non-home rule county boards for the ongoing maintenance and construction of essential infrastructure.

AUTHORIZE ALL NON-HOME RULE COUNTIES TO REGULATE SPECIFIC ADULT USE FACILITIES

PROBLEM

In 2019, legislation was enacted to provide DuPage County with regulatory authority over adult entertainment facilities in unincorporated areas of the county when the facilities involve exposure of specified anatomical areas or performance of specified sexual services or activities (P.A. 101-0405).

PROPOSAL

Expand the regulatory authority provided in the law to all non-home counties.

CLEAN-UP STATUTE CONCERNING DUPLICATE TOWNSHIP NAMES

PROBLEM

The Illinois Secretary of State is responsible for identifying instances where two or more townships in the state share a name. In such instances, it becomes the responsibility of the county (or counties) with the township(s) that did not adopt the name first to adopt a different name for the township(s). The Secretary of State does not actively enforce this statute and duplicate township names would most likely only be an issue if similarly named townships are located within the same county.

PROPOSAL

Amend the statute to require that a county change a duplicate township name only if the duplicate names exist within a single county.

ALLOW COUNTY BOARDS TO BE "CO-EMPLOYERS" IN LABOR NEGOTIATIONS

PROBLEM

A county board does not have authority to participate in labor negotiations involving the offices of the county clerk, circuit clerk or chief judge and their respective bargaining units. The board or its designee is even restricted from observing the negotiations unless the negotiating parties agree to allow for observation. A county board is ultimately responsible for funding what is negotiated and therefore has a financial interest in the outcome.

PROPOSAL

Amend the law to consider the county board as a "co-employer" when the offices of the county clerk, circuit clerk and chief judge are involved in labor negotiations with their respective bargaining units. This will allow the county board, as the appropriating body, to participate in the negotiations.

ELIMINATE EXCESSIVE TOWNSHIP INFLUENCE OVER COUNTY ZONING DECISIONS

PROBLEM

Current law allows townships that have a planning commission within a county of less than 600,000 residents to object to a proposed county zoning ordinance affecting the unincorporated area of the township. If the township submits a written objection to the county board within 30 days following submission of the proposed zoning ordinance or resolution by the County Zoning Commission to the county board, then the county board is prohibited from adopting the zoning provisions without a three-fourths vote of the board.

PROPOSAL

Remove the provision that allows an objection by a township to increase the vote threshold necessary for a county board to approve a zoning ordinance or resolution in a county with fewer than 600,000 residents.

ELECTION OF COUNTY BOARD CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

PROBLEM

In counties where the position of chairperson and vice chairperson are elected by county board members and not voters, each position is elected by a majority or plurality of those present at the time of the vote. If there is a vacancy in the office of county board chairperson, the vice-chairperson is permitted to serve as chairperson for the duration of the departed chairperson's two-year term.

PROPOSAL

Require the chairperson and vice-chairperson to be elected by a majority of those elected to the board instead of among those present at the meeting during which the election is held. Permit the vice-chairperson to fill a vacancy left by a departed chairperson only until a new chairperson is elected and not automatically for the remainder of a two-year term.

PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT INCENTIVE

PROBLEM

Local governments under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) have a disincentive to abate a portion of their property taxes out of concern they will lose the ability to include the amount abated within the following year's aggregate extension base. The law essentially incents taxing districts to levy the maximum amount permissible under PTELL or lose the additional property tax dollars in perpetuity.

PROPOSAL

Authorize taxing districts to order the county clerk to abate any portion of what is found to be surplus revenue while allowing for the amount of the abated revenues to be included in the following year's aggregate extension base.

COLLECTING UNPAID TAXES RESULTING FROM ERRONEOUS HOMESTEAD EXEMPTIONS

PROBLEM

The Illinois Revenue Code creates homestead exemptions and establishes a mechanism for erroneously granted homestead exemptions to be recouped by counties for distribution to the various taxing bodies within the counties. Cook County has a stronger enforcement mechanism than the other 101 counties as a result of being able to look at prior years' property tax payments to determine if an erroneous homestead exemption led to underpayments. These unpaid taxes are collected and interest payments are permissible.

PROPOSAL

Authorize all counties to review the past 3 years of property taxes paid by a taxpayer when the taxpayer is found to have improperly claimed a homestead exemption. Unpaid taxes would be collected and the county may impose interest on the amount of the unpaid taxes.

ALLOW WEBSITE POSTING OF PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

PROBLEM

In general assessment years, counties must post a list of all property assessments in a newspaper of general circulation within the county. In the years between general assessments, counties are mandated to publish in a newspaper a list of only those real property assessments that have been changed. These publication requirements are expensive.

PROPOSAL

Allow county governments to meet the property assessment publication mandate by either publishing the information on a county website or in a newspaper of general circulation in the county. Allowing counties to fulfill the publication mandate on their websites would save taxpayers thousands of dollars annually and the information would be more accessible to the public.

ELECTION MODERNIZATION

PROBLEM

The manner in which elections are conducted is changing as increasing numbers of voters take advantage of opportunities to vote early or by mail. Despite these changing preferences among voters, counties are stuck in the past and are required to operate and fund, at the same historic levels, a statutorily defined number of polling places on Election Day. This outdated approach diverts scarce resources away from rising vote by mail costs.

PROPOSAL

Local election jurisdictions should be granted the flexibility to operate regional voting centers and to more efficiently manage the election process based on the evolving needs of their voters.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

PROBLEM

The COVID-19 pandemic is straining county budgets as a consequence of the additional services and activities required to address the needs of county residents. The requirement for additional financial resources to contend with the pandemic has compelled county public health departments to shift existing resources toward pandemic-related expenses. Federal and state funding has not bridged these local budget gaps.

PROPOSAL

The State should appropriate additional funding to public health departments based upon their critical role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and other public health issues in local communities.

DUTIES OF COUNTY AUDITORS

PROBLEM

Illinois state statute prescribes several duties for the county auditor. The law imposes additional duties on auditors in counties of 275,000 or fewer residents. These duties involve accounting functions that go beyond auditing functions.

PROPOSAL

Allow county boards in counties with 200,000 or fewer residents to decide whether or not the county auditor should perform accounting duties described in state statute as "additional duties."

ADDITIONAL TIME TO REDRAW COUNTY BOARD DISTRICTS

PROBLEM

Counties are required by law to redraw county board districts every 10 years. To accomplish this, counties are dependent on timely data from the U.S. Census Bureau. The COVID-19 pandemic has created delays in the availability of this essential data for the 2020 Census.

PROPOSAL

Amend the law to sensibly extend the deadline by which county boards must redraw districts for the 2020 census in accordance with the revised census timelines.

RECOVER COSTS FOR MODIFYING HIGHWAY PROJECTS TO ACCOMMODATE FAILURE OF UTILITY TO RELOCATE FACILITIES

PROBLEM

Illinois law does not presently allow for cost recovery associated with expenses resulting from the State or a county highway authority needing to revise their project plan to meet a deadline as a result of a utility's failure to relocate their facilities in a timely manner.

PROPOSAL

Amend the law to allow the state and county highway authorities to recover costs associated with expenses resulting from the State or county highway authority needing to revise a project plan to meet a deadline as a result of a utility's failure to relocate their facilities in a timely manner.

Protect County LGDF Revenue!

During his February 17, 2021, budget address, Governor JB Pritzker proposed a State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022 state budget that includes a 10% reduction in Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) allocations to municipalities and counties compared to distribution levels within the current SFY 2021 state budget. LGDF is the mechanism through which state income tax dollars are shared with counties and municipalities.

ISACo opposes this proposed cut and will engage aggressively and constructively with legislators and the Governor in an effort to prevent any reduction to LGDF distributions. But we need your help! To this end, we have launched a "Protect County LGDF Revenue" page on our website (www.isacoil.org) with additional information about LGDF, the proposed cut and tools for use in communicating your opposition to state legislators and the Governor.

Visit

www.isacoil.org/top-level-protect-county-revenues/

ISACo POLICY BRIEF

The Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF)

QUICK FACTS

• LGDF plays an

important role in

funding everyday ssential local services for Illinois citizens

LGDF revenue is the

local governments

result of a partnership between the state and

Recent years have seen reductions to the percentage of income

tax revenues allocated

to local governments

The state has kept for

additional income tax

venue raised from

through LGDF.

itself 100% of

OVERVIEW

The Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) was established in 1969 as part of the then newly-enacted state income tax. Counties and municipalities are allocate percentage of the total state income tax revenues through this fund. The local share is distributed on a per capita basis. LGDF revenue is an important funding source for local governments and is a successful partnership between the state and eligible local governments.

Historical Trends for the Local Share

Until January 2011, counties and municipalities received 10% of total state income tax revenues through LGDF. Following a temporary increase in state income tax rai in 2011, the percentage of tax revenue allocated to LGDF for distribution to local tax rates counties and municipalities declined to 6%.

Although the state decreased the percentage of LGDF revenue shared with counties and municipalities, local governments continued to receive approximately the same dollar amount they had been receiving as a result of increased tax revenues brought about by the higher income tax rates.

In January 2015, the local share of the state income tax increased to 8% when the higher income tax rates declined according to a predetermined schedule established by law. Revenues distributed to counties and municipalities from LGDF remained about the same as the amount collected before the income tax rates declined.

higher tax rates. The state income tax was permanently increased in 2017 and the local governm share was reduced to 5.45% for individual income tax collections and 6.16% for corporate income tax collections for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2018. The LGDF share was increased within the SFY 2021 state budget and is presently 6.06% for individual income tax collections and 6.845% for corporate income tax collections



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102nd General Assembly Calendar

Session dates are subject to change due to COVID-19 protocols.

IL House - March 2021						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 SESSION	3 SESSION	4 SESSION	5	6
7	8	9 SESSION	10 SESSION	11 SESSION	12	13
14 Daylight Savings Time Begins	15	16 SESSION	17 SESSION St. Patrick's Day	18 SESSION	19 SESSION	20
21	22	23 SESSION	24 SESSION	25 SESSION	26 SESSION DEADLINE -Committee Substantive HBs	27 Passover
28	29	30 Spring Break	31	-		
Palm Sunday						

IL Senate - March 2021



IL House - April 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 Spring Break	2	3
					Good Friday	
4	5	6	7 Spring Break	8	9	10
Easter		General Election				
11	12	13 SESSION	14 SESSION	15 SESSION	16 SESSION	17
18	19	20 SESSION	21 SESSION	22 SESSION	23 SESSION	24
			Administrative Day		DEADLINE 3rd Reading HB's	
25	26	27 SESSION	28 SESSION	29 SESSION	30	

IL Senate - April 2021



IL House - May 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4 SESSION	5 SESSION	6 SESSION	7 SESSION	8
9 Mother's Day	10	11 SESSION	12 SESSION	13 SESSION	14 SESSION DEADLINE Cannaitre SB's	15
16	17	18 SESSION	19 SESSION	20 SESSION	21 SESSION	22 SESSION
23 SESSION	24 SESSION 31 SESSION	25 SESSION	26 SESSION	27 SESSION	28 SESSION	29 SESSION
30 SESSION	31 SESSION Memorial Day STATE HOLIDAY ADJOURNMENT				DEADLINE 3rd Reading SB's	

IL Senate - May 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3 SESSION	4 SESSION	5 SESSION CINCO DE MAYO	6 SESSION	7 SESSION	8
9 Mother's Day	10 SESSION	11 SESSION RAMADAN ENDS	12 SESSION	13 SESSION	14 SESSION DEADLINE Sub Houre Bills Out of Committee	15
16	17 SESSION	18 SESSION	19 SESSION	20 SESSION	21 SESSION	22
23	24 SESSION	25 SESSION	26 SESSION	27 SESSION	28 SESSION DEADLINE Third Reading Substantive Hease Bills	29 SESSION
30 SESSION	31 SESSION MEMORIAL DAY STATE HOLIDAY ADJOURNMENT					
			IMPORTANT DATE ADLINE - Substantive Ho ADLINE - Third Reading !	use Bills out of Committe	20	

ISACo Congratulates Newly-Elected

House & Senate Leaders



House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch (D-Westchester) was elected as the 70th Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives in January 2021 and is the first Black lawmaker to serve as Speaker in Illinois history. His district is within Cook County.

Speaker Welch began his tenure in the Illinois General Assembly in January 2013. Prior to becoming Speaker, he served as Chair of the House Executive Committee and, before that, Chaired the Higher Education Committee.

Speaker Welch currently serves in the "Of Counsel" capacity with the local government law firm Ancel Glink.



State Senator Dan McConchie (R-Hawthorn Woods) was elected Illinois Senate Republican Leader in November 2020. His district covers parts of Cook, McHenry, Lake and Kane Counties.

Leader McConchie began his service in the State Senate in April 2016. Prior to being elected Republican Leader, he served as Minority Spokesperson for the Appropriations II Committee and the State Government Committee, and served on the Public Health, Higher Education, Insurance, Labor, and Telecommunications and Information Technology Committees.

State & Local Fiscal & Recovery Funds Signed into Law

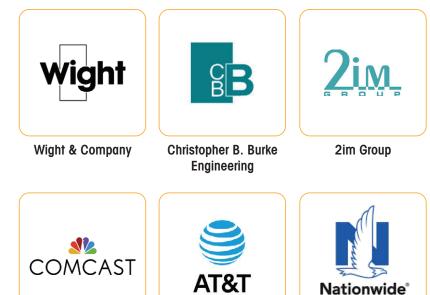
The U.S. House and Senate finalized and approved the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act and President Biden signed the Act into law on Thursday, March 11, 2021.

The plan includes \$65.1 billion in direct, flexible funding for counties as part of the State and Local Fiscal and Recovery Funds. For Illinois, this would mean an estimated allocation for counties of over \$2.5 billion. This is a substantial amount of money for counties and it can be used to make up for tax revenues lost due to the pandemic along with other allowable uses. The National Association of Counties (NACo) has provided information about allowable uses and this information is available on ISACo's website (www.isacoil.org).

ISACo advocated in support of this additional federal funding for counties with Illinois' Congressional delegation and partnered with NACo throughout the process. Estimates about how much each Illinois county would receive can be found on ISACo's website. The money will be released in two tranches, with the first 50% of the funding getting to counties within 60 days of enactment and the remaining 50% no earlier than 12 months following the first tranche. Once again, the amounts provided are estimates and may change.

ISACo will continue to provide updates to counties as information becomes available. We will dedicate a page on our website for resources that provide guidance about how the funds can be expended as we learn more. Much of this guidance is anticipated to come from the U.S. Treasury Department.

ISACo Corporate Partners **Thanks for Your Support!**



Comcast

AT&T



Nationwide

Become an ISACo Corporate Partner!

ISACo's Corporate Partner Program was established to provide a forum for companies and organizations to build relationships with county officials while supporting the important work of ISACo.

The program offers five options for corporations and organizations to become associate members of ISACo while receiving benefits for this status.

Contact us for additional information about how your company or organization can become a part of ISACo.

ISACo Honors Black History Month

In recognition of Black History Month, ISACo staff unveiled a February social media campaign that highlighted the key people, places and events contributing to the story of Black history in Illinois. It's an important story that needs to be told again and again. Please visit our Facebook page (@ISACoIL) and Twitter feed (@ISACoTweets) if you missed this important campaign. We ask that you follow our content by liking our social media feeds.



News & Views e-Newsletter Subscription



Are you receiving our **ISACO NEWS & VIEWS** e-newsletter?

If not, please check your spam folder to make sure our newsletter is not being blocked. Otherwise, please e-mail Brenna Metrow at bmetrow@isacoil.org with a request to be added.

> Don't miss out on these valuable ISACo updates!

Follow ISACo on SOCIAL MEDIA



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Counties Count!

>>>

County Quarterly Newsletter

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