

News You Can Use

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

November 2022

Election day is over, votes are being counted, democracy is working, making sure every voice is heard.

Here at the League of Women Voters of Illinois, we have our eye on what is expected to happen in Springfield during Veto session this week.

In this issue of *News You Can Use*, find out what legislation we are watching for Veto and Lame Duck sessions. Please use your voice beyond the ballot box. Let your legislators know where you stand on election policy, criminal justice, reproductive rights and gun violence prevention.

We must continue to hold our representatives accountable for representing us—which means we must let them know what we want.

Remember this is a marathon, not a sprint.



[Allyson E. Haut, Ph.D.](#)

President

League of Women Voters of Illinois

Democracy depends on every vote

Thank you to every pollworker, election judge, and sandwich-maker who kept them fed.

Thank you to every candidate who put themselves on the line.

Thank you to every voter who stood in line, mailed in a ballot, dropped off a ballot, helped another voter get to their polling place.

Together, we make democracy work—democracy depends on all of our voices.

Take your voice beyond the ballot box

Find your current legislator



Our elected officials are bound by their constitutional oath to represent the will of the people. In order to do that, they need to hear from the people they represent. It really is that simple.

Tell your elected representatives what you want. Use their online contact portals, call their offices.

Constituents have power.

What should I do right now?

Speak up for legislation that the Illinois General Assembly (ILGA) is likely to take up during either the Veto or Lame Duck sessions—before newly elected legislators take office in January.

VETO Session 2022: Election policy and Criminal justice

Veto Session is when ILGA reconvenes for up to two weeks in the fall. This session is used to address any bills the governor has vetoed, and/or to pass other legislation.

Because the governor did not veto any legislation this year, ILGA will use this veto session to take up legislation which did not get passed during the regular session.

Veto Session is scheduled for November 15–17 and November 29–December 1, 2022.

LAME DUCK Session 2023: Reproductive Health and Gun Violence Prevention

Lame Duck Session can be convened after elections at the end of ILGAs two-year term. It is one last time for current legislators to pass bills.

This term, Lame Duck session would be before the 103rd General Assembly takes office on January 11, 2023.

Speak up! Contact your legislators



Veto Session

Election Policy:

Make Vote Centers permanent

During the recent election, Illinois law required each election authority to establish at least one Vote Center, where any voter within the jurisdiction could vote, regardless of their assigned polling location. This law expires in January 2023.

Making Vote Centers permanent would improve voter access by eliminating confusion for voters in areas where polling locations are different from election to election.

Speak up!

Tell your legislators you want to make the Vote Center requirement a permanent part of Illinois election law.

Criminal Justice:

Modifications to the Pretrial Fairness Act

The Pretrial Fairness Act is part of the Safety, Accountability, Fairness and Equity, or SAFE-T Act that was signed into law in February 2021. The Pretrial Fairness Act upholds one of the fundamental principles of our justice system, “innocent until proven guilty” and will be fully implemented in January 2023.

One element of the Pretrial Fairness Act is the elimination of cash bail. Elimination of cash bail is based on the idea that people who are accused of crimes should be treated equally. Access to wealth should not affect your ability to remain free before your trial.

In addition, research shows:

- Cash bail does not increase the likelihood of people showing up for their court hearings
- Pretrial detention undermines family and community structure

What’s happening now?

It is not unusual for lengthy laws like the 700-page SAFE-T Act to be clarified with the passage of additional “trailer bills.” Such is the case now—a trailer bill will likely be presented during Veto Session as a way to clarify and maintain the [key accomplishments](#) of the Pretrial Fairness Act.

Speak up!

Tell your legislators to **pass a trailer bill** that will:

- Retain presumption of release unless the accused can be shown to be a flight risk or a danger to the community;
- Ensures that people currently jailed for the inability to post cash bond could request a hearing to evaluate their eligibility for release;
- Maintain the essential features of the Pretrial Fairness Act.

Tell your legislators to **oppose trailer bill SB4228** because it has provisions that will undermine the essential features of the Pretrial Fairness Act.

Get the [facts](#) about the Pretrial Fairness Act using the resources on the [LWV of Illinois website](#). Combat misinformation by sharing the facts with your community.



Lame Duck Session

Reproductive Health:

Protections for patients and health care providers, expanded capacity, and support for patients

Illinois has some of the most robust protections for abortion care in the country. However, the anticipated influx of care-seekers from neighboring states will push Illinois providers beyond their capacity.

Illinois lawmakers are looking for ways to expand licensing provisions as a way to increase service capacity (allowing physicians assistants and other providers to be licensed). They are also expected to propose legislation to strengthen licensing protections against claims from other states and strengthen extradition and privacy protections for care-seekers.

Legislation will likely be proposed during the Lame Duck Session so that an immediate effective date can be written into the legislation and passed by a simple majority.

Speak up!

- Tell your legislators that you want reproductive healthcare protections in place for Illinois providers and patients.
- Follow organizations who lead the the work in this area: [ACLU Illinois](#), [Planned Parenthood Illinois](#), [Illinois Now](#), [Midwest Access Coalition](#), [Chicago Abortion Fund](#).

Gun Violence Prevention:

Ban Assault Weapons and High Capacity Magazines

Immediate action to ban assault weapons is the number one priority of the gun violence prevention movement right now.

In Illinois, gun violence prevention organizations have come together in a coordinated campaign, [Halt the Assault](#), to advocate for a statewide assault weapons ban. More than 200 Illinois organizations have signed on, with primary support coming from Gun Violence Prevention Action Committee, One Aim Illinois, Everytown for Gun Safety, Giffords, and Moms Demand Action.

The work begins now, with an expectation that legislation will be brought to the floor during the Lame Duck Session, when a simple majority is needed to pass legislation.

Speak up!

- Tell your legislators you want assault weapons banned in Illinois.
- Sign up for alerts from [Halt the Assault](#), which is holding a digital day of advocacy November 28.

Follow gun violence prevention organizations such as [Moms Demand Action](#), [Everytown for Gun Safety](#), [Giffords Law Center](#), and [March For Our Lives](#) (the organization started by the student survivors of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida).

Some gun violence prevention organizations are deeply involved in eradicating the root causes of violence. They advocate for things like community investment, violence intervention, and youth mentor programs. Follow the work of organizations like [Institute for Nonviolence Chicago](#), [Chicago CRED](#), and [Communities Partnering 4 Peace](#).

Know where & when to use your voice effectively

A quick review of how laws are created in Illinois



In Illinois, laws are proposed and voted on in the Illinois General Assembly, or ILGA. ILGA is made up of two chambers, the House and the Senate. Illinois is made up of 59 legislative districts, and each of those elects one senator for either a two- or four-year term. Each of the 59 legislative districts is divided into two representative districts. Each of those 118 districts elects a representative to the House for a two-year term.

Each General Assembly conducts business during a two-year term beginning when new House members take office. The House and Senate members elected on November 8, 2022 will take office on January 11, 2023, and the 103rd General

Assembly will commence.

Bills can be proposed in either chamber: the House or the Senate. Once they are passed in their chamber of origin, they move to the other chamber. Most bills pass by a simple 51% majority vote: 60 votes in the House and 30 in the Senate. Bills that pass both chambers are sent to the governor for signing. The governor has 60 days to either veto a bill or sign it into law. If the governor does nothing for 60 days, the bill becomes a law. [See the detailed path of a bill.](#)

Regular/General Session convenes each year in January and usually adjourns the last day of May. This year, the Regular/General Session was adjourned early, on April 9, to allow for a delayed Primary Election. The Primary was delayed to allow time for district maps to be drawn based on 2020 Census data that was delayed due to Covid shutdowns.

Timing is important

The session during which a bill is introduced affects the number of votes it needs to pass.

During the General and Lame Duck Sessions, a bill requires a simple majority, or 60 votes in the House and 30 in the Senate, to pass. However, during the Veto session, a bill needs 70 votes in the house and 36 in the Senate.

The calendar date on which a bill passes can determine when a law takes effect.

Bills passed before May 31 of a calendar year go into effect on January 1 of the next calendar year, unless a different effective date is written into the bill.

Bills passed after May 31 of a calendar year go into effect June 1 of the next calendar year, unless the General Assembly approves an earlier effective date, written into the bill, by a three-fifths majority.

Bills passed during the Veto Session need to meet this three-fifths majority threshold if they are written with an immediate effective date.

Bills passed during a Lame Duck Session in January only need a simple majority to pass, whether or not they are written with an immediate effective date.

Your legislators need to hear from you year-round.

Contact them today.

Speak up for what you want!

Run for office

Make an impact in your community by running for office in the municipal elections this spring! November and December are the months for filing for elective office in your community. Learn more about [how to run for office in Illinois.](#)

Support the League

Protect democracy—[donate](#) to LWV of Illinois. Your gift makes it possible for us to make trusted, nonpartisan resources and education opportunities available to every person in Illinois.

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Thank you for supporting our work to defend democracy and empower voters.



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League of Women Voters of Illinois | 332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 634, Chicago, IL 60604

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