Illinois Laws Taking Effect January 1, 2026 (over 300 laws)

Taxes & Consumer Changes

End of Illinois Grocery Tax

- The 1% state sales and use tax on groceries is eliminated.
- Local counties/municipalities can still impose up to 1% at the local level with approval from the Department of Revenue.

Public Safety & Criminal Justice

Safe Gun Storage & Reporting Rules

- Gun owners must secure firearms in locked containers where minors or prohibited persons could access them.
- Lost or stolen guns must be reported to law enforcement within 48 hours (down from 72).
- Creates a path for some first-time firearms offenders to pursue legal gun ownership after completing diversion programs.

Human Trafficking Law Update

- Eliminates the 25-year statute of limitations for trafficking crimes against minors — victims can pursue charges at any time.
- Law enforcement can no longer impose waiting periods before accepting missing persons reports, and must keep cases open until the person is found.
- Agencies must conduct more comprehensive background checks on new officers, including past employment and personnel records.

Squatter Removal

- Police can remove unlawful occupants from private property without a court eviction order and pursue trespassing charges.

Family & Workplace Rights

Paid Breaks for Nursing Mothers

- Employers must provide 30 minutes of paid break time for nursing mothers to pump breast milk throughout the workday for up to one year after childbirth.

- Employers can’t require use of vacation or other paid leave for this purpose.

Protected Leave

- Workers with a newborn in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) gain additional job-protected, unpaid leave.

Health, Insurance & Wellness

Expanded Health Insurance Coverage

- 2026 laws require insurers to cover name-brand drugs when generics are out of stock.

Vaccine Access Expansion

- Illinois expands vaccine authority so pharmacists can administer certain shots (e.g., for young children) to improve access statewide.

Medical Aid in Dying

Medical Aid in Dying (Deb’s Law)

- Allows terminally ill residents with a prognosis of six months or less to obtain prescribed medication to end their life, with strict safeguards (multiple requests, evaluations, and self-administration). Does not take effect until September, to allow time for hospitals, pharmacies, etc to prepare.