

Summaries of Issues Reports for March, 2017

Water – Krista Grimm

The League supports HB 2958, which would instill a ban on the use and sale of high-PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon) pavement sealants. A TFA was sent to members asking for submission of witness slips in advance of a Tuesday, March 14 hearing. The bill remains in the Consumer Protection Committee.

LWVIL also issued a TFA in support of Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funding, and increased funding for water infrastructure. The President eliminated the GLRI in his budget. The final determination of whether the program will survive lies with Congress, which holds the power of the purse strings. If the program is cut, state agencies like the Illinois EPA will lose this source of federal funding. Federal funding for the State Infrastructure Revolving Loan programs was slightly increased in the budget.

Criminal Justice: Janet Kittlaus

Illinois General Assembly bills supported by the League at this time:

HB689/SB1578-- Civil Asset Forfeiture Law Reform: submitted witness slip (HB689)

SB 2074 – Background Forgiveness Act: submitted witness slip and signed on to fact sheet; bill will not move: federal law preempts this proposal, making it unenforceable.

HB 2373 – Expand Record Sealing Eligibility: submitted witness slip and signed on to fact sheet.

HB3817/SB2021—Youth Opportunity & Fairness Act: (Juvenile Expungement): signed on to fact sheet

The League is opposing SB1722 which would increase sentences for gun possession. (witness slip)

Healthcare: Margaret O’Hara & Janet Craft

As part of the plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, Congressional Republicans have introduced the American Health Care Act. The Congressional Budget Office reviewed the bill and stated it will reduce the federal deficit by \$337 billion from 2017-2026. However it estimates that by 2018 14 million Americans will be uninsured, and by 2026 that number will increase to 26 million. The future of the bill is uncertain because it is unpopular with conservatives, who see it as still an entitlement, and liberals are upset by the projected increase in uninsured people.

LWVIL has joined the coalition of advocacy and social service groups and healthcare providers called Protect Our Care Illinois (PoCIL). We are working to prevent the repeal of the ACA without an adequate replacement. Our focus at the present time is certain Illinois US Representatives who support the repeal, some of whom sit on important committees. Those representatives are:

Peter Roskam, 6th District, House Ways and Means Committee; Michael Bost, 12th District; Rodney Davis, 13th District, Randy Hultgren, 14th District, John Shimkus, 15th District House Energy and Commerce Committee; Adams Kinzinger, 16th District, House Energy and Commerce Committee; and, Darin LaHood, 18th District. We have reached out members who live in these districts asking them to make contact with these legislators and inform them how their constituents feel regarding this issue, and stay in contact with Protect Our Care IL website, Facebook, and Twitter for fact sheets, talking points, and upcoming events.

Addendum to March 2017 Health Care Report

Since Janet Craft, Health Care Issue Specialist lives in the 14th District, she looked for ways Leagues could advocate effectively with Rep. Randy Hultgren, a POC IL targeted conservative legislator, she opted to obtain an appointment for the District Leagues. On March 6, representatives from 2 of the 4 District Leagues met with Representative Hultgren. Recently, the Central Kane League in visits to two state representatives, they conveyed a message to Representative Hultgren to slow down repeal/replace of ACA, and raised serious concern over changes to Medicaid in Illinois. When a copy of the message was delivered to Representative Hultgren, he said that he had just met with them.

Reproductive Rights: Margaret O’Hara & Janet Craft

Bills being followed:

SB78 Funding Responsibility Act - as of 2/26 on calendar of 3rd reading - short debate

HB40 Abortion Various – on 2nd reading.

Immigration: Kim Reed

The White House issued its amended Executive Order barring those from 6 Muslim countries to enter the US. This ban, like its predecessor, is often referred to as the "Muslim Ban." Federal judges in Hawaii and Maryland ruled against the ban this week, preventing it from going into effect. The White House has threatened to appeal these rulings. Additionally, the White House continues to promote its agenda to build a wall at our southern border, increase spending for border protection and enforcement of immigration laws. This plan also includes using privately run detention centers. Immigrants, especially those who are undocumented, are living in fear of detention, deportation, and family separation. Many good government groups and immigrant-friendly organizations are providing "Know Your Rights" trainings and assisting these populations in putting together family and estate plans in anticipation of separation (temporary custody for children, etc.). Schools are seeing an increased rate of absenteeism from these populations as a result of these fears.

In the Illinois General Assembly, HB3099 "The Trust Act" was referred to the House Executive Committee, and HB426 "The Safe Zones Act" was referred to the House Rules Committee.

Fiscal Policy: Kathy Nesburg

The State of Illinois has been operating without a budget for most state expenditures since January 1, 2017. There is a partial budget covering K-12 spending. The state has been funding most state expenditures using the authority of court orders and continuing appropriations. The Attorney General challenged the use of state monies without a budget and appropriations. The challenge lost at the district court level. She has appealed the question to the Illinois Supreme Court.

The state's deficit at the end of FY2016 was \$9.59 Billion. The deficit resulted, in part, because the expiration of the temporary tax increase costs the state approximately \$5 Billion per year in revenue. The deficit also occurred despite a cut in services of \$4 Billion, which happened without the governor proposing a budget which called for cuts to services or the General Assembly voting for cuts.

The Commission on Government Forecast and Accountability (COGFA), which does economic forecasting for the General Assembly, said that for FY2017 through February 2017, there is a 5% reduction from the same time last year in receipts from the combined personal and corporate income taxes and the sales tax. That is the rate of decline seen in the last recession. They revised their earlier estimate of revenues from tax receipts downward by \$674 million. The bond rating agencies keep lowering Illinois' rating, which means that the state must pay more money to borrow money than it would with a better rating.

The Senate tried to reach a "Grand Bargain" to begin to take care of the state's fiscal problems. There were many items on the table including increasing the income tax and broadening the sales tax to include services. The Governor intervened and demanded that there be a property tax freeze and workers compensation changes before he could support the "Grand Bargain". He did this despite using the "Grand Bargain" to plug a \$4.6 billion hole in his proposed budget.

Campaign Finance: Paula Lawson

LWVIL created witness slips supporting SB1424 Amendment 1 and SB2089. SB1424 amends the Election Code to create a Small Donor Campaign Matching System for Illinois State Constitutional Officers and for State Senators and State Representative. SB2089 closes a loophole in the Election Code. It requires tax-exempt organizations (501(c)(4) and 501(c)(6)) under the federal Internal Revenue Code defined as political action committees, ballot initiative committees, and independent expenditure committees who make contributions to candidates to report their donors. Both bills passed out of the Senate Executive Committee and were placed on Order of Second Reading for 3-28-17.

Automatic Voter Registration: Sharon Alter

The Illinois Senate Executive Committee voted 10-3 in favor of passing SB1933 sponsored by IL Senator Manar. SB1933 has seventeen cosponsors and is now scheduled for a second Senate reading on March 28. HB3695 sponsored by IL Representative Gabel is the Illinois House equivalent of SB1933 and is currently in the House Voter Education & Registration Subcommittee. The language of this bill is very similar to SB250 which Governor Rauner vetoed in August 2016.

Air and Energy: Laura Kratz and Di Niesman

The new administration in Washington has unveiled budget recommendations calling for severe cuts to the EPA and other agencies and programs that protect and promote the well-being of the American people and our environment. The proposed cuts are based on assertions by the President and members of his cabinet that the EPA has over stepped its mandate and that business/industry convenience and profit take precedence over the health and safety of the American public. The official USEPA purpose is to ensure that:

- **all Americans are protected from significant risks to human health and the environment where they live, learn and work;*
- **national efforts to reduce environmental risk are based on the best available scientific information;*
- **federal laws protecting human health and the environment are enforced fairly and effectively;*
- **environmental protection is an integral consideration in U.S. policies concerning natural resources, human health, economic growth, energy, transportation, agriculture, industry, and international trade, and these factors are similarly considered in establishing environmental policy;*
- **all parts of society -- communities, individuals, businesses, and state, local and tribal governments -- have access to accurate information sufficient to effectively participate in managing human health and environmental risks;*
- **environmental protection contributes to making our communities and ecosystems diverse, sustainable and economically productive; and*
- **the United States plays a leadership role in working with other nations to protect the global environment.*

Meanwhile, here in Illinois, the 2017 Ozone Season - the time of year when a mix of pollution emissions and high temperatures can combine to produce unhealthy conditions for outside activity - began on March 1st. This is a month earlier than in the past. The Illinois EPA provides the daily air quality forecast at <https://www.airnow.gov>.