

Getting up to Speed on **SB1, EVIDENCE-BASED FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.**

Understanding the issues related to SB1 can be a daunting task but here are some tips:

- Read the Resources listed at www.fundingilfuture.org/resources
- Arrange for a Public Forum by contacting Teresa Ramos

(ramos@advanceillinois.org). All you need to do is reserve a location with the capacity to show a PowerPoint. Teresa Ramos and others at Advance Illinois (<http://www.advanceillinois.org/>) will present the program and even provide an additional advocate or two.

Jean Pierce and Claire McIntyre, Education Issue Specialists

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

These bill are on Governor Rauner's desk, awaiting his signature:

HB0375 (requires probation officers to undergo Crisis Intervention Team training)

HB303 (Civil Asset Forfeiture Law Reform—offers more protection for innocent parties and greater reporting requirements)

HB0514 (requires immediate sealing of a record of arrest or charge if result is acquittal or dismissal)

HB0698 (creates the Prisoner Entrepreneur Education Program to teach business skills and enable successful reentry into society)

HB2373 (expands record-sealing eligibility)

HB2738 (allows video visitation in prisons to enable those in prison to maintain relationships with loved ones)

HB2987 (ensures that Illinois youth who are or were homeless, in foster care, or court-involved have a chance to get the jobs and internships they are qualified for and need)

HB3165 (requires that training of personnel working with juveniles include restorative justice courses)

HB3712 (helps men and women in prison to get access to tablets that will be used expressly to educate, hone skills, and video visit loved ones)

HB3817 (expands automatic expungement and strengthens confidentiality of juvenile records)

HB3903 (does not allow a place of detention or criminal processing on school grounds)

SB1688 (improves occupational licensing opportunities by creating a transparent and fair licensing process that looks at license applicants' rehabilitation along with criminal history.

SB1781 (expungement or sealing fee waiver pilot extended)

LWVIL ACTIONS:

- Witness slip was filed for HB303SA1.
- President Bonnie Cox sent letter to Governor in support of HB3817.
- Members were asked to contact Governor to sign into law HB2373, HB3817, and SB1688.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

The Chicago *Tribune* reports “Sessions revives asset forfeiture by police” even as advocates seek to reform this practice (see HB303).

The ACLU, in a lawsuit, has accused the Illinois Youth Center in Harrisburg of improperly and unnecessarily seeking prosecutions of several dozen detainees. Youth are being prosecuted based on reckless, minor misconduct, which until recently, would have been handled internally through the facilities’ disciplinary system. This kind of excessive punishment can be ruinous for young lives.

Janet Kittlaus, Criminal Justice Issue Specialist

HEALTH CAREThe Affordable Care Act (ACA)

Since January 2017, there has been a great deal of advocacy around the United States against President Trump and the Congressional Republican’s plans to repeal and replace ACA. Of special concern is the planned cuts to federal funding for Medicaid.

The House struggled to create a bill that was acceptable to a majority of its members. Finally, on May 4, 2017, after much pressure from the President, and House leadership, the House passed the American Health Care Act (AHCA), by 2 votes, and it was then on its way to the Senate.

Once there, it was determined that the AHCA was too punitive to pass the Senate, so a committee worked in secret on a new version - the Better Care Reconciliation Act (BCRA). Since Senate leadership did not have enough votes, the bill was not called before the July 4th recess, despite promises to the contrary.

At the same time Congress was considering repeal and replace legislation, all over the country, protests and town halls reflected negative reaction to the proposed legislation.

On July 13th the Senate introduced the newest compromise version of the BCRA. This version continues comprehensive policies that included some of the benefits from ACA, but allows insurance companies to create less expensive bare-bone policies that would offer fewer

benefits. This is so that healthier people can save money by not having to pay for benefits they may not need. However this may result in only the sickest people sign up for the more robust plans, making them even more expensive. This bill has the federal government provide funds to stabilize this market, but just how much money will be required is unknown. Also taxes on the wealthy removed in the House have been reinstated. The cuts to Medicaid remain.

Then on July 17th 2 more senators announced that they would not vote for this bill, and it became apparent that it would not pass the Senate. Since then each day there is a different announcement from the President and/or Republican leadership as to what is the plan for the ACA. One day, they will move on to other legislation and come back at a later date to repeal and replace it. The next day it was announced the ACA will be repealed, and replacement will come later. Then the President pressures Senators to pass a healthcare bill.

On July 25th, the Senate voted to begin debating Republican proposals to dismantle much of the Obama health care law. Vice President Pence's tie-breaking vote was necessary to process to the debate on the Senate floor of the next iteration of a Senate bill.

It now appears the main motivation to pass this legislation is that for 7 years the Republicans have pledged to repeal Obamacare, and during his campaign President Trump promised the same thing, so they seem concerned that their voters would be upset if this promise is not fulfilled. However the latest Kaiser poll, shows only about 5% of GOP and Trump supporters say healthcare was the main factor in their vote, while about 40% say it was the direction of the country. Also a poll taken in mid-June by the Kaiser Foundation now shows that for the first time over 50% of Americans favor ACA.

LWVIL ACTIONS

Working with the Protect Our Care Coalition, League members have been involved in arranging for town hall meetings with Representatives, protests, and other actions to advocate "No Repeal without Adequate Replacement".

On June 20th Margaret O'Hara, Healthcare Issues Specialist, testified before the Illinois House Appropriations Human Service Committee in support of HR0445 American Health Care Act. She was a member of a panel of nurses where she related her experiences working with patients with lack of, or insufficient insurance coverage due to a previous health condition, and also requested that Governor Rauner publicly oppose the American Health Care Act. On June 28th the HR0445 was adapted. A TFA was sent on July 25th, asking members to contact Governor Rauner to ask him to publicly denounce the present bills with their cuts to Medicaid.

Reproductive Rights

HB40. Removes a trigger provision that, if the Supreme Court ever reverses or modifies *Roe v Wade*, Illinois will revert back to its pre *Roe* position, making abortion an illegal criminal act. The legislation also requires abortions are covered for women insured by Medicaid or the Illinois State Employees Health Insurance. On 4/25/17 the bill passed the House. On 5/10/17, it passed the Senate.

LWVIL Action

LWVIL sent a proponent witness slip, and TFA to support. However, on April 14th Governor Rauner's office announced he will veto the bill if it should pass. LWVIL sent TFA requesting members contact the Governor and ask him to reconsider this decision.

Margaret O'Hara and Janet Craft, HealthCare Issues Specialists

IMMIGRATION

In Illinois

SB31 the Illinois Trust Act

Won final approval by the Illinois General Assembly with bipartisan support. The bill is waiting on Governor Rauner's desk. A LWVIL TFA went out on June 21, encouraging members to call the Governor, requesting his signature. The TRUST Act would prevent local police from detaining people for immigration purposes without court-issued warrants and would forbid local police from stopping, searching or arresting anyone based on their immigration or citizenship status, upholding basic requirements under the US and Illinois Constitution.

In the United States

Travel Ban

Federal Courts had blocked the Trump Administration's "Travel Ban," but because of an appeal to the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court partially reversed the federal courts ruling and is allowing the ban to go forward until they hear the case. The Supreme Court did say close relatives of those in the US would be exempt from the ban, but the Supreme Court did not define "close relatives" – that was left to the State Department, whose list did not include grandparents. A Federal Judge in Hawaii ruled that the list of those exempt should include grandparents and other close relatives not included on the State Department's original list.

The Dream Act

Senators Lindsay Graham and Dick Durbin re-introduced The Dream Act this week: "Provisions in the bill would apply to Dreamers if they graduate from high school or earn a GED; pursue higher education, work lawfully for at least three years or serve in the military; pass background checks; and demonstrate proficiency in English and a knowledge of U.S. history." (National Immigration Forum)

SUSTAINABLE FOOD & WATER

No significant bills related to sustainable food production were passed by the General Assembly. However, there were amendments to the Cottage Food Law and the Food Handling Regulation Enforcement Act, that would expand opportunities for local food entrepreneurs

(HB3063) which passed unanimously in both chambers and is currently on Governor Rauner's desk. Legislation to standardize public health measures at farmers' markets (HB2820) passed unanimously in the Senate; the House the vote was 113 yes, 2 no.

Important bills that failed to advance this session included changes to the Livestock Management Facilities Act and creation of an Industrial Hemp Act.

Sheri Latash, Sustainable Food & Water Issue Specialist

AIR QUALITY & ENERGY

Did you know?

While in Milan, Italy this week, Chicago Mayor Emanuel is announcing a new partnership between the Illinois Institute of Technology's Institute of Design (IIT-ID) and Politecnico di Milano University's School of Design that will increase international academic cooperation and support research into urban design solutions for a sustainable economy. We hope he sees - and is inspired by - this Milan apartment building.

LWVUS

The New Mexico LWV convention adopted a study this spring to develop a position on protecting and storing low nuclear reactor level waste in that state. Because they hope the position, if adopted, will become a consensus item at a national convention in the future, they have reached out to Leagues in the 34 states that have spent fuel so we can be fully acquainted with the issues when the time comes to do so. Laura Kratz has been receiving information from the New Mexico Leagues study chair. Anyone interested in receiving their updates please contact Laura.

Illinois Legislation

HB2831 Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE)

Passed in both the House and Senate, sent to the Governor on June 15th
PACE financing lets counties and municipal governments develop financing programs so local businesses and homeowners can upgrade their property with energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. The costs are repaid as part of the assessment on the property tax bill where the upgrade has been made. This will be a "double opt-in" program where a county or municipality must first decide to create a local PACE program and then individual property owners can decide whether opting-in makes sense for them.

SJR 353 Environmental Justice Agenda

Adopted by the Senate on May 31, 2017

The resolution calls for cooperation to *"work together to create an environmental justice agenda that creates clean energy jobs that are accessible to all, addresses gender inequities and*

income disparities as we move toward a green economy, reduces recidivism rates while curbing climate change, and shapes policy that addresses the adverse and disproportionate impacts of climate change upon communities of color and economically-disadvantaged communities;

The resolution also says:

... funds in the Renewable Energy Resource Fund, which were paid for by Illinois electric customers, must be preserved and maintained for the Illinois Solar-for-All program as established by the Future Energy Jobs Act, and protected from sweeps, interagency transfers, chargebacks, or other reallocation of those funds away from their statutory purposes.

SB 71 Wind Energy Authorization

Passed both Houses on May 24th; signed by Governor and went into effect on June 30th. Removed an unintentional impediment to wind energy development included in the Future Energy Jobs Act. (Public Act 100-0016)

National

The US House of Representatives retained an amendment to the 2018 defense funding bill affirming the threat of climate change to the security of the US and ordering officials to draw up a report on which facilities would be most affected.

The house also sliced the EPA budget by 6.5% in its appropriations bill earlier this month, rejecting the President's proposed 31% cut to the agency's budget which had been approximately \$8 billion.

World News

It was reported on July 15th that 25% of homes in Australia are now powered by solar energy.

Laura Kratz & Di Niesman, Air Quality & Energy, Issue Specialists

WATER

Two programs of special note to consider in the federal budget process are the *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative* and the *State Revolving Loan Funds*, which provide states with funding to offer loans to municipalities for drinking water and sewerage infrastructure projects. Both programs made it out of the U.S. House Appropriations Committee with funding at the level advocates sought, in defiance of the Trump Administration. There is optimism that Great Lakes legislators will come through for the lakes. The question is what horrible riders could be attached to the funding bills?

House Appropriators also restored most, but not all, of the administration's cuts to the EPA budget. It is currently down 6% from FY2017. Other relevant agencies' budgets are similarly being cut.

The administration has pre-published its intent to rescind and recodify the Waters of the United States Rule of the Clean Water Act, and we're watching for the actual notice to be published in the *Federal Register*. Look for a TFA with a request to submit comments in support of the rule.

The City of Evanston adopted a coal tar sealant ban in July thanks to the organizing efforts of LWV Evanston!

SOCIAL POLICIES

Housing. Consider signing into a webinar produced by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington D.C. entitled "The 2018 Trump Budget's Proposed Rent Policy Changes and Impacts". The data demonstrates the need for affordable rental housing.

July 24th the U.S. House Appropriations Committee approved FY18 HUD (Housing & Urban Development) spending bill for affordable housing and community development programs. It is estimated the appropriation would result in the loss of more than 140,000 housing vouchers, a program which subsidizes the cost of rent.

Food Assistance. The Heartland Alliance Social IMPACT Research Center has released a new report entitled "Data Matters: Who are the Illinoisans Likely to Lose Food Assistance in 2018?" The report suggests that households currently eligible for SNAP recipients would no longer be eligible. The data in this report can be found on www.heartlandalliance.org.

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Voices for Illinois Children, along with other advocates recently testified before the House Revenue and Finance Committee in support of an EITC increase in Illinois from 10% of the federal credit to 14% in tax year 2017 and then to 18% in tax year 2018.

The increase anticipated in SB 9 "will provide nearly one million working families in Illinois with additional money at tax time to help pay for necessities like groceries, child care or car repairs or to be saved for an emergency", according to Voices for Illinois Children.

Some resources:

- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
- Heartland Alliance
- Voices for IL Children
- Housing Action Illinois
- Responsible Budget Coalition

Jan Kay, Social Policies Issues Specialist