

This Week in Illinois

ICYMI: CHAMBER INITIATIVES RELEASED

To view the Chamber's 2018 legislative initiatives for our policy councils, please click [here](#).

THIS WEEK'S LEGISLATIVE SESSION RECAP

The House and Senate returned to town this week for legislative action both on the floor and in committees. The week's headlines were dominated by various proposals to curtail the use and access of firearms. However, it was still a rather busy week with several issues of importance to the Illinois Chamber membership. For more, see below.

SB 3005 WOULD LITIGATE STATE TO HALT

A proposal that would significantly hamper the existing Administrative Review Law proceedings at state agencies passed out of committee this week. [SB 3005](#) would allow any "persons" to appeal or intervene in lawsuits challenging decisions of state agencies. This means that any person, Illinois resident or not, can be listed as an interested party in a proceeding, a power currently afforded to the agencies and plaintiff party requesting the proceeding. The legislation currently has been refined to apply only to permitting decisions by the Departments of Agriculture, Natural Resources, Transportation, Public Health, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

This would open the floodgates for interest groups to interject in administrative decisions before the State of Illinois, causing severe logjams, excessive litigation and further undermine the ability of businesses in Illinois to obtain the necessary approvals to operate in the state. Proponents of the legislation have stated in committee hearings they are seeking opportunities for more lawsuits to challenge state decisions. This not only impacts the activities of state government, but also the health and safety of the public, and the operation of our whole economy.

The permitting process for state agencies differs vastly. The central theme, however, is that there are opportunities for the public and third parties to engage in the process and the State is responsible for eliciting those comments and concerns and considering them when determining whether to grant a permit. This bill upends decades of carefully balanced negotiation designed to put the best interest of Illinois' citizens first. The existing permitting process engages public opinion and threads the desires of the public with the health, safety, security, and economic opportunity the State is obligated to provide its citizens.

This legislation has been amended twice and began much more broadly than it is now. The drafters included all state agencies in the underlying legislation, either not appreciating its impact or not caring. No matter how this legislation changes, or what industries or agencies may later be carved out, we oppose the concept and the precedent it sets. Efforts to layer on burdensome requirements to increase lawsuits in the state and bog economic activity down for our businesses, farmers, and citizens is just bad policy. Particularly when public protections are already in place. We encourage members to reach out to your elected officials in the Senate to voice your opposition to this bill.

CALL CENTER BILL PASSES COMMITTEE

This week, [HB 4081](#) (Halpin) passed the House Economic Opportunity Committee 8-5-0. This bill would severely restrict Illinois' competitiveness as a destination for call centers. This bill would require businesses to notify the state Treasurer of their intention to move a call center or substantial operations out of the state. If you fail to notice,

businesses would be subjected to a \$10,000 per day for being in violation of the Act. It would also cost taxpayers millions of dollars by restricting state agencies' ability to strategically locate call centers throughout the country.

For obvious reasons, the Chamber opposes this bill as it would severely restrict Illinois' ability to attract and recruit corporate relocation efforts. The definition of "call center" is too broadly defined to potentially include customer service, technical troubleshooting, help desk, building maintenance, dispatch, order processing, hotlines, and sales.

THIS WEEK: OTHER LEGISLATION TO NOTE

A few other bills to mention that either passed out of committee or on the House and Senate floor include:

- [HB 198](#) (Hoffman/Raoul) passed the Senate 35-16-0. This bill creates the Worker Protection Unit within the Office of the Illinois Attorney General to intervene in, initiate, enforce, and defend all criminal or civil legal proceedings on matters and violations relating to specified statutes. Provides further powers and requirements of the Attorney General in the Worker Protection Unit. The Chamber opposed the bill. It now heads to the Governor.
- [SB 2999](#) (Van Pelt) passed out of the Senate Labor Committee 14-2-0. This bill amends the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act to require an employer to reimburse an employee for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employee directly related to services performed for the employer. The Chamber opposes the bill as is but the sponsor has agreed to hold the bill on 2nd reading and work with the Chamber on a legislative fix.
- [HB 4163](#) (Moeller) passed the House [87-24-0](#). This bill amends the Equal Pay Act of 2003 to prohibit an employer from (i) screening job applicants based on their wage or salary history, (ii) requiring that an applicant's prior wages satisfy minimum or maximum criteria, (iii) requesting or requiring as a condition of being interviewed or as a condition of continuing to be considered for an offer of employment that an applicant disclose prior wages or salary, and (iv) seeking the salary, including benefits or other compensation or salary history, of a job applicant from any current or former employer. Limits an employer's defenses and provides for penalties and injunctive relief. Chamber opposed.
- [HB 4324](#) (Welch) passed out of House Labor & Commerce. This bill creates the Wage Lien Act to allow for the creation of a lien on an employer's property for the amount of unpaid wages owed to an employee. It appears the sponsor and industry are at odds and it will likely result in a floor battle where our chances are best to defeat the proposal. Chamber opposes.
- [HB 4900](#) (Guzzardi) Is Rep. Guzzardi's generic drug price control bill. Passed out of Human Services on a party-line vote. The Chamber opposed and testified against the bill.
- [HB 2617](#) (Gabel) Iatrogenic infertility health insurance mandate passed out of Human Services. The Chamber opposed.
- The Chamber testified in the joint subject matter hearing (House Energy and House International Trade) on the Trump Administration's solar tariff and its impact on solar implementation in Illinois.
- [SB 2863](#) (Raoul) passed out of Senate Judiciary 7-4-0. This bill is identical to HB 2525 of last year (that Gov. Rauner vetoed). This is fake workers' comp and codifies bad case law.
- [HB 4516](#) (Fine) passed today with the promise to return the bill to committee with an amendment to take care of concerns. This bill would mandate insurance policies cover hearing aides for those under the age of 18. The Chamber opposed.

CHAMBER SUPPORTS IEPA'S VW SETTLEMENT PLAN

This week the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency released its Beneficiary Mitigation Plan on the Volkswagen settlement to the public. The Illinois EPA has been designated as the lead agency to administer funds allocated to Illinois from the Volkswagen Environmental Mitigation Trust. Illinois' initial allocation of funds is \$108 million to be used to fund mobile source projects. The funds are to be used for projects that reduce emissions of nitrogen oxides in Illinois.

Beneficiaries may not request payout of more than one third of their allocation in the first year and no more than two thirds of their allocation within the first two years; eighty percent of the funds must be obligated within ten years. Illinois EPA anticipates a minimum of three application funding periods. The Settlement allows funds to be used for projects that repower or replace eligible engines or vehicles that fall into ten different categories, listed in the plan [here](#).

Illinois headquarters many of our nation's top manufacturers that create vast amounts of jobs across the state. The Illinois Chamber supports the Illinois EPA's commitment to ensuring sufficient money in the plan goes to clean vehicles and clean locomotives while offering employers of all kinds the ability to access the plan. Investing in Illinois' heavy industry, infrastructure and business community is a chance to maximize our state's economic growth. Our state faces many economic and environmental challenges, but we support the balanced approach of policy that encourages business growth with smart environmental investment.

The current phase is allowing public comment for review and input. The first round application will be in May.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN: CHAMBER DAY 2018

Primary and gubernatorial politics are shaping the policy debate in Springfield and will have lasting implications on the business community. On April 11th, join us in our first ever Chamber Day - an advocacy effort to let lawmakers know we must be heard in any major policy decision impacting Illinois employers. This new event will combine our local chamber summit and the Chamber's traditional lobby day to better show our strength in numbers. [If you are ready, you can register TODAY by clicking here.](#)

CHAMBER HOSTS INAUGURAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Illinois women are Second to No One. On March 27, 2018 join the Illinois Chamber of Commerce at our inaugural conference to harness the experiences, leadership, and aspirations of women in business, politics, and the nonprofit world to explore what it takes to put more cracks in that glass ceiling. Hear from inspiring women who've been through it and take away that energy to blaze your own path. This conference aims to empower our already Strong Women for a Stronger Illinois. [Registration & Agenda](#) [here](#).