

Legislative Director Report: North Cook County/Lake County Gerri Songer – August 2020

Monday, July 20, 2020

Attended *Senator Ann Gillespie & Representative Mark Walker's Webex Live* event. State Senator Ann Gillespie and Representative Mark Walker joined NWSOFA's Fiscal & Economic Meeting to discuss the IL State Budget, the importance of Illinois' recently enacted [Vote-by-Mail](#), and the upcoming vote on the [Illinois Fair Tax](#). Candidate *Maggie Trevor* was also online. Economic Co-Leads were two of NWSOFA Fiscal Experts, Karl Faulstich and David Doney,

Virus-Free Voting

Information on Vote-by-Mail (VBM) is available at: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OOEoVpahHMxVvdq5xHhDtOaP1TDq26oq/view?usp=sharing>

Oregon is the pioneer of voting by mail. The state of Oregon has sent out more than 100 million mail-in ballots since 2000 and has documented only about a dozen cases of proven fraud. This is only 1 ballot for every 10M ballots cast.

Members can register to vote at <https://ova.elections.il.gov>.

If members are already registered, or are not sure if they are registered, registration can be verified at <https://ova.elections.il.gov/RegistrationLookup.aspx>. This site also provides the Election Day Polling Place and District information.

If members have recently moved or changed their name, they will need to update information at the above website.

Why is Vote-By-Mail a better option?

Anticipating a return of COVID-19 in the fall of 2020, voting-by-mail is a safer option. Also, it prevents what happened in WI on April 7 and in IL on November 3 when many election judges refused to serve due to COVID-19 fears, causing hundreds of polling places to be consolidated.

[SB1863](#) Vote-by-Mail

This bill sunsets on January 1, 2021. It requires the ISBE to set up a VBM application request capability on their IL state website. All election jurisdictions will be required to mail or email a VBM ballot application by August 1st to anyone who:

- voted in 2018, 2019, and 2020
- or registered to vote after the March 17 primary
- or changed their address after the March 17 primary

SB1863 also requires the Secretary of State to mail a reminder by September 15 to all who received a VBM ballot application but have not responded.

If anyone registers for VBM then changes his or her mind, one can bring his or her *ballot* and *envelope* to the precinct to vote in person.

Completed VBM ballots are to be returned by mail (USPS) or at new optional “collection sites” consisting of locked metal boxes placed at a location at the discretion of local election officials.

*** Using locked boxes at voting centers** is recommended for mailing in ballots to avoid potential USPS problems.

Early voting sites must be open by October 19, 2020 and be open, at a minimum, from 8:30a-7p weekdays and from 9a-5p on weekends and holidays. SB1863 makes election day a holiday for all K-12 public schools, post-secondary institutions governed by the State Universities Civil Service Act, and all government offices excluding the offices of election authorities.

Important Dates

All requests for VBM ballots must be received by the Election Authority by **October 29, 2020**. Ballots will be sent to voters who have requested a VBM ballot starting **September 24, 2020**. Ballots must be postmarked or dropped off at a ballot drop-box (secure collection site) by the end of the day on **November 3, 2020**.

VBM can be requested *now* at:

Suburban Cook County - <https://www.cookcountyclerk.com/agency/vote-mail>

Chicago BoE - <https://chicagoelections.gov/en/vote-by-mail.html>

Lake County - <https://www.lakecountyil.gov//4321/Voting-by-Mail>

Want more information?

IL Senate Dems - <https://www.illinoisenatedemocrats.com>

Greater Palatine Area Democrats - <https://www.gpadems.org>

The HEROES Act

Sen. Gillespie and Rep. Walker spoke about *The Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act* (HEROES Act), H.R. 6800, a \$3T stimulus package in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Republicans have stated that it will be "dead on arrival" in the Senate, criticizing the HEROES Act as a "liberal wish list".

For more information about this presentation, contact karl.faulstich@gmail.com.

Wednesday, July 22-24, 2020

Attended On-line to Offline (*O2O*) *3 Day Training* to learn digital tools, tactics, and strategies that enhance on-line communications. Worked with Matt Dowd on new group page, [Local1211 Takes Action](#).

Saturday, July 18; Saturday, July 25; and Monday, July 27, 2020

Attended Progressive Caucus to set priorities for the 2020 AFT Convention.

Tuesday, July 28-Thursday, July 30, 2020

Attended AFT Convention 2020. See AFT Delegate report for more information.

Monday, August 17, 2020

Submitted amendments for the Public Community College Act and Illinois School Code to Jack Lockhart, a staffer from Senator Gillespie's office. These amendments will mandate that one teacher serve on a school board in an advisory capacity. The nonvoting faculty member shall have the privilege of casting advisory votes. The nonvoting faculty member shall have all of the privileges of membership, including the right to make and second motions and to attend executive sessions, other than the right to vote. Amendments will be introduced in January.