

LWVIL ISSUES & ADVOCACY REPORTS 2021-2023

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Issue Specialist: Janet Kittlaus

OVERVIEW

In 2021, LWVIL updated its Criminal Justice position which allows advocacy on a broader range of issues. A great deal of focus from 2022 to 2023 was on the SAFE-T Act, and specifically, the Pretrial Fairness Act (PFA), the part of the SAFE-T Act which abolished cash bail. To have gone into effect January 1, 2023, the PFA will learn its fate when the Illinois Supreme Court rules on its constitutionality. A number of bills did succeed in becoming law; nevertheless, an ongoing frustration is the unwillingness of the General Assembly to enact reform measures that would make our criminal legal system more just (See E. below.)

LWVIL ACTION: 2021- 2023

The SAFE-T Act (HB3653 (PA101-0652) was passed in the lame duck session in January, 2021 and the Governor signed the bill on January 22, 2021. Despite the passage of trailer bills: HB3443, (PA102-0028), HB3512 (PA102-694) and HB1095 (PA102-1104), the SAFE-T Act continued to be blamed for a spike in crime even though most of it did not go into effect until 2023.

The Illinois Supreme Court Pretrial Implementation Task Force was created to prioritize and implement the recommendations of the Supreme Court Commission on Pretrial Practices Final Report and help prepare the justice system for the changes coming once the PFA took effect in 2023. The Task Force held a series of monthly town hall meetings via zoom monthly beginning in June and continuing into 2023.

In September, LWVIL hosted a webinar for all LWVIL members and the public featuring a panel which explained the details of the PFA and addressed concerns and questions. Afterward, fact sheets and the recording of the LWVIL webinar were sent in response to local League inquiries.

In October, Jean Pierce and Janet Kittlaus met via zoom with Sarah Staudt of Chicago Appleseed for Fair Courts to review a trailer bill, SB4228, opposed by the Illinois Network for Pretrial Justice (INPJ), of which LWVIL is a member. Jean and Janet then met with Jamie Mosser, state's attorney for Kane County, who supported SB4228 to learn her perspective. The trailer bill that was finally passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor in December was HB1095 (PA102-1104). Concessions to opponents were relatively minor.

Opponents then brought a lawsuit against the SAFE-T Act and in January, 2023, LWVIL joined the 426 organizations and individual elected officials, faith leaders, lawyers, and law professors in

filing [an amicus brief](#) in support of the PFA. On January 31, the INPJ hosted a webinar, The Legal Challenge to the Pretrial Fairness Act. It is expected that the Illinois Supreme Court will make its ruling in May, 2023.

LWVIL supported with Time for Actions (Action Alerts): HB88 (PA102-0178), HB3665 (PA102-0494), and SB828 (which in 2023, has a new bill number HB39.) LWVIL signed onto fact sheets in support of HB1268, SB1830, and SB1886. LWVIL submitted witness slips in 2023 for: HB1268 and HB39.

In February, 2022, LWVIL signed onto a letter to the Resentencing Task Force which was established by PA102-0099, to study innovative ways to reduce the prison population in Illinois. The letter offered Thirteen Principles for Earned Release Sentencing Reform in Illinois as a suggested framework for the Task Force's deliberations and its final written report. The letter and Principles can be found [here](#).

In March, 2022, a Breakout Session at Issues Briefing How Can People With Arrest Or Criminal Records Ever Become Fully Free? highlighted the plight of those who complete their sentences and yet face over 1,000 permanent punishment laws and regulations.

During 2022 LWVIL became a member of a number of coalitions which inform our advocacy:

- Court Transparency Coalition focuses on legislation to amend the Illinois Freedom of Information Act to make the judicial branch subject to FOIA.
- Criminal Justice Advocates, convened by Cabrini Green Legal Aid, gathers CJ Advocates who share the bills they are working on.
- Fully Free Campaign supports legislation that will eliminate the permanent punishments and barriers faced by people returning from incarceration.
- Illinois Blueprint for Peace does not meet but its [website](#) includes a report and recommendations to reduce gun violence. A 19 minute video gives an overview of the Blueprint report and recommendations.
- Illinois Network for Pretrial Justice supports the Pretrial Fairness Act and convenes groups doing the same throughout the state.
- Illinois Drug Policy Reform Coalition--Reducing Barriers to Recovery exists to pass legislation to reduce the harms caused by existing criminal penalties related to drug use: HB3447 in 2022 and SB1830 in 2023. A [report](#), Reducing Barriers to Recovery has been released by the ACLU and Chicago Appleseed Center for Fair Courts.
- Justice 2020 Network is not a coalition but a multi-year effort to bring together the diverse perspectives of individuals, organizations, and communities seeking to address the inequities of the criminal legal system. Justice 20/20 has four working groups that meet monthly: Policing, Pretrial and the Courts, Incarceration and Reentry, and Safe and Thriving Communities.

The Criminal Justice Google Group has 78 members: it is sent reports, notices of events, and requests to submit witness slips and to contact legislators and/or the governor on issues and bills pertaining to criminal justice and juvenile justice.

KEY LEGISLATION: 2021-2022

- HB 0088 (PA102-0178) removes the eligibility restriction that bars people with drug-related felony convictions from receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.) This is one of the permanent punishments (partially) abolished.

- HB2427 (PA102-0430) creates a task force to make recommendations in a report to improve the quality of legal services being offered throughout the state: due to the General Assembly and Governor no later than December 31, 2022. This task force has yet to be created.
- HB2784 (PA 102-0580) permits a 911 response option separate from law enforcement for mental and behavioral health emergencies.
- HB3235 (PA102-0606) provides that 45 days prior to the scheduled discharge of a person from IDOC, IDOC shall provide information about: obtaining an ID card; voter registration; job listings; available housing ; and other information to aid the person in a successful reentry to society.
- HB3587 (PA102-0099) creates a task force to study retroactive sentencing and ways to reduce Illinois's prison population. It is hoped that its recommendations will prompt positive legislation.
- HB3665 (PA102-0494) allows the Prisoner Review Board to grant early release to an incarcerated person for medical incapacity or terminal illness.
- HB4392 (PA102-0933) allows petitioning for expungement or sealing of criminal records even after testing positive for cannabis from a drug test—since cannabis is now legal in Illinois.
- HB 5525 (PA102-0814) creates the Commission on Children of Incarcerated Parents to implement and coordinate the recommendations of the Task Force on Children of Incarcerated Parents. Whether the commission has been created is unknown.
- SB 1976 (PA102-0895) provides that IDOC shall appoint a point of contact person who shall receive suggestions, complaints, or other requests from visitors to IDOC institutions or facilities and from other members of the public.
- SB 2129 (PA102-0102) provides that State's Attorneys may petition the sentencing court to resentence an individual if the original sentence no longer advances the interests of justice.

KEY LEGISLATION 2022-2023

The following bills have passed both Houses and await the Governor's signature.

- HB1268 provides that a person who has been convicted of a felony is qualified to act as an executor of an estate if certain conditions are met. HB1268 addresses only one of over 1,000 permanent punishments which are imposed upon people who return from prison.
- HB1496 enables IDOC to know home addresses for incarcerated citizens and to provide them to authorities for voting and census purposes.
- SB1886 eliminates drug testing fees, limits testing for alcohol and cannabis to appropriate cases, and ensures that doctors, not courts, make treatment decisions for people on probation.

SUMMARY AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE ACTIONS

All of the Acts and bills pending the Governor's signature noted above represent positive criminal justice reform, but some are qualified successes. The reliance on punishment rather than rehabilitation, the imposition of lengthy sentences keeping people incarcerated long after they pose a safety threat, and the unwillingness to restore parole, all retard progress toward meaningful reform. Incarcerated people are denied the respect due all human beings, and most have scarce access to programs and services that would help in their successful return to society. Those individuals who do leave prison continue to be burdened with permanent punishments. Progress toward a just criminal legal system is very slow.

The following are bills that failed to pass but which will surely be back. These bills would:

- Restore voting rights to incarcerated people (HB39)
 - Restore parole to treat fairly those who have demonstrated rehabilitation or who are elderly and pose no safety threat (SB2129 and HB2045)
 - Use public health strategies to reduce the harms associated with drug use (SB1830)
 - Continue to eliminate the permanent punishments still inflicted upon people who have fully served their sentences (HB2824)
 - Provide more support for those returning from prison so that recidivism can be effectively reduced (HB1245/SB75)
 - Create a transparent court system so that data is available on such things as the length of time for cases to move through the system in each county (HB2455)
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DEATH PENALTY ABOLITION

Issue Specialist: Janet Kittlaus

OVERVIEW

The League was an active participant in the efforts during 2010 to abolish the death penalty. This goal was achieved in early 2011 when legislation passed the House on January 6, the Senate on January 11, and was signed into law on March 9.

Although Abolition is now law in Illinois, the League will continue to monitor any attempts to reinstate capital punishment.

ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE CHANGE

Issue Specialists: Laura Davis and Bill Koehl

OVERVIEW

Climate change and impacts are accelerating. COP21 - December 2015, Paris, France - engaged governments to agree to a new set of goals to guide global action. A Lancet report says the world's continued reliance on fossil fuels increases the risk of food insecurity, infectious disease and heat-related illness. IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) highlights greater emphasis on regional information to better understand impacts and responses, increased risks with higher warming levels, increased emphasis on adaptation, links between the natural world and humans, and emphasizes the role of cities as places of increasing vulnerability.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA-federal bill) has a lot of money to be used in states, counties and communities for climate mitigation strategies. In Illinois, IRA funds are driving a strong push to build pipelines that would carry CO₂ (carbon dioxide) to areas in southern Illinois.

In Illinois, the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) (Public Act 102-0662 SB2408) was signed into law September 15, 2021. CEJA was recognized in the UN Global Goals as #7 in the 10 global goals for affordable and clean energy. Working groups were created to drive the benefits and

prevent weakening of CEJA, in addition to driving quicker closure of gas plants and particularly the Prairie State coal plant.

National – The US re-entered the Paris Agreement for Climate Crisis management on February 19, 2021. The Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015 by 196 parties that pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

LWVIL ACTION: 2021-2023

- June 2021 - the LWVIL signed on to a letter from the Shedd Aquarium to Senator Durbin in support of the Chicago River Habitat Conservation Restoration and Conservation Jobs Training Pilot initiative. This initiative supports restoration of a polluted ecosystem while offering job training and career development opportunities for youth and neighborhood community members.
- August 2021 - LWVIL signed on to a coalition letter with the Illinois Clinicians for Climate Action (ICCA) (icca@ms2ch.org) to IL legislators regarding the health impacts of the climate crisis on human health.
- Sept. 2021 - Time for Action for league members to call legislators to pass the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA)
- Sept. 8, 2021 - Request to LWVIL members to call/email legislators to support SB1751, House Amendment 1. This is a reasonable path forward to a true climate and equitable jobs bill. This bill contains a specific timeline for the closure of coal plants, and as amended also includes interim carbon pollution reductions for the Prairie State coal plant and Dallman coal plant in Springfield.
- October 2021 - LWVIL and LWV Greater Rockford Area sent a letter to legislators supporting the National Land Institute's proposal for a road around the Bell Bowl Prairie in the Great Rockford Area airport .
- March 2022, the LWVIL signed on to an organizational letter regarding protecting the Bell Bowl Prairie in Rockford, IL.
- March 2022 - Time for Action asking Senators to vote YES in support of HB4093 which requires potential polluters to hold public meetings prior to applying for a permit to operate in an Environmental Justice Community.
- March 2, 2023, the LWV United States signed on to an organizational letter to Administrator Regan, Environmental Protection Agency to reduce methane and other harmful pollution from oil and gas development. The letter request was presented through the LWVIL.
<https://earthworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/EPA-Methane-2023-Group-Letter.pdf>
- April 2023 - LWVIL president, Allyson Haut, signed on to google form supporting SB0085 for LWVIL . SB0085 - Bottle Bill - returns bottles to manufacturers generated by CPR (Coalition for Plastic Reduction) SB0085 (Beverage Container Refund)

Issues Briefings:

- March 20, 2022 - Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel - Two LWV New Mexico members (and nuclear engineers) presented the New Mexico league's approved position on nuclear waste storage with goal of getting the LWVIL support for the position
- Feb. 2023 – Carbon Capture and Sequestration: What is it and why should we be concerned?

Presentations:

- Sept. 2, 2021 – Google group - Climate: Naperville NEST sustainability plan, plastics, 30x30 (protect land and water)
- Oct. 7, 2021 – LWV Oak Park-River Forest - Environmental Update: CEJA, Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, Plastics, PFAS
- Nov. 19, 2021 - Climate google group - Climate/Environmental update
- Feb. 10, 2022 - Climate google group - Climate/Environmental update
- May 12, 2022 - Climate google group - Climate/Environmental update
- April 27, 2023 - LWV Elmhurst – Lake Michigan and Plastics presentation (in person- Elmhurst Library)

Lobby Day April 24, 2023 target bills:

- HB 2376 Polystyrene Reduction
- HB 3119 Carbon Dioxide Transport and Storage Protection
- HB 3595 Power Plant Demolition, Transparency, and Protection

KEY LEGISLATION: 2021-2022

SB2408 - Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) signed into law Sept. 15, 2021

Significant steps to address climate crisis by moving the state to 100% renewable energy by 2050 and creating equitable, good-paying jobs across the state particularly in Black and Brown communities, and enacting tough accountability measures.

KEY LEGISLATION: 2022-2023

- SB0058 - Degradable Plastic Single use – passed - waiting for Governor’s signature
Sets up a plan to study how to reduce the quantity of single-use plastic by the state. After January 1, 2025, State agencies and departments may not procure disposable food service containers that are composed in whole or in part from polystyrene foam for use at any State agency or department and instead shall offer only compostable foodware or recyclable foodware for use at the State agency or department.
- HB3119 - Carbon Dioxide Transport Act – Support
Offers protections for residents and landowners and eliminates eminent domain for CO2 pipelines and forced amalgamation of pore space in sequestration areas. Puts safeguards in place.
- HB1616 - Chemical recycling/pyrolysis - Oppose
Allows for a pyrolysis or gasification facility in a locally zoned approved site in either Will or Grundy county. Plastic burning.
- HB2202 - Underground CO2 Act - Oppose
Allows for underground storage of carbon dioxide.
- HB 2376 - Polystyrene Reduction - Support
Eliminates polystyrene containers from the restaurant industry.
- SB0085 - Beverage Container Refund - Support
Creates the State Beverage Recycling Refunds Act - a deposit return system for beverage containers in Illinois.

- HB2520/SB1578 - Environmental Justice Air Permitting - Support
Requires the review of cumulative impact of air pollution sources and denial of air pollution permits that are unhealthy for impacted communities .
- HB1608/SB1578 - Coal Ash Removal in Waukegan - Support
Requires the removal of all coal ash from the Waukegan Electric Generating Station to protect the largest public drinking supply in Illinois.
- HB2086 - Consumer-owned containers - Support
Gives restaurants guidelines to allow customers to use their own containers for food pickup.
- HB3595 - EPA- Environmental Justice - Support
Power plant demolition transparency and air pollution.

SUMMARY AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE ACTIONS

Illinois has made headway dealing with the climate crisis through the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act. However, there are many efforts to weaken or slow down the planned goals of the Act, particularly concerning gas and coal plants closure.

A lot of energy is being spent in safeguarding landowners and communities from pipeline development and transport of CO2. We expect to see continued activity to decrease plastic production and use, and a wider focus on general waste management. Additionally, land use and zoning issues regarding protection of land and water resources, open space, restoration, tree equity and protection of biodiversity are getting and will continue to gain more recognition and energy.

FAIR AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Issue Specialist: Kathy Cortez

OVERVIEW

Access to housing is supported by the LWVIL under its Fair Housing and Meeting Basic Human Needs positions. The LWVIL supported and advocated for range of legislative initiatives that addressed discriminatory practices by landlords, funding aimed at increasing the supply of affordable housing, and facilitating the ability of people to overcome obstacles to getting access to housing.

LWVIL ACTION: 2021-2023

- 3 Actions/Bills endorsed by LWVIL
- Issued 2 Witness slips
- Coordinated a session for the 2023 Issues Briefing. (*Good Intentions vs Good Laws: Why Advocacy Still Matters*)
- Coordinated a session for the 2021 Issues Briefing. (*Housing is Everything: The Role of Stable Housing in Creating Economic Success*)
- Worked with coalition partner **Housing Action Illinois** along with other housing advocates at **HOPE Fair Housing** and **Illinois Housing Council** to pass housing legislation.

KEY LEGISLATION: 2021-2022

- HB2775 – SOI Discrimination - Legislation guarantees nondiscrimination on the basis of a renter’s source of income (SOI). Passed the House but failed the Senate in the first session. Subsequently passed the Senate in the veto session.

KEY LEGISLATION: 2022-2023

- HB1569/SB0242 Evict-Impound File-Dismissal – Legislation which was endorsed by LWVIL would seal eviction proceedings under certain conditions such as when a judge found in favor of the tenant or when a landlord failed to pursue the eviction. As of May 3, this legislation had not moved forward for a vote in either chamber.
- HB2044 / SB1737 Build Illinois Homes Tax Credit Act: Provides that owners of qualified low-income housing developments are eligible for credits against the taxes imposed by the Illinois Income Tax Act. Rather than addressing this funding bill via law, the LWVIL supported the Illinois Housing Council’s efforts to promote funding for Illinois tax credits as part of the budget process.

SUMMARY AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE ACTIONS

In addition to the specific legislation identified in this report, LWV members continue to advocate for legislation to strengthen the AHPAA. Incremental improvements were included in the Omnibus Housing Bill that was signed into law in 2022. Additional measures are being addressed in 2023 legislation (SB1476) that passed the Senate and successfully passed out of the House’s Housing Committee. We are also looking forward to addressing housing issues at a local level with a suburban coalition of local leagues that began to meet in 2023 to exchange ideas and tactics for local implementation.

FISCAL POLICY

Issue Specialist: Ann Courter

OVERVIEW

Through a roller coaster of revenue surpluses and shortfalls over the past two years, advocacy by members of the League helped increase funding in the FY23 and FY24 budgets for education from early childhood through higher ed, and for basic human needs for all residents. The state’s debts were paid and the rainy day fund was bolstered, in part through closing corporate tax loopholes and federal pandemic relief funds. In FY23, a permanent expansion of the state Earned Income Credit helped make the revenue system a bit more fair, but more improvements are needed, including a child tax credit and a graduated rate income tax.

A serious discussion about possible new revenues, cuts, or a combination of the two needs to begin soon, because over the next three years, current state spending is projected to outpace base revenues, even without passage of the League’s priorities like fully funding education, early childhood care, and meeting basic human needs.

LWVIL ACTION: 2021-2023

- Co-sponsored a webinar, “What Nonprofit Stakeholders Need to Know About Budget Advocacy in Illinois”

- Co-sponsored an online forum, "*What You need to Know about Invest in Kids - IL's Tax Credit Voucher Program*"
- Lobby day asks on the FY24 budget included support for a state Child Tax Credit, increased Evidence Based Funding for public schools, and the Build Illinois Homes tax credit
- Drafted press release on Governor's proposed FY23 budget
- Coalition memberships:
 - Responsible Budget Coalition, Executive Committee
 - Cost of Living Refund Coalition
 - We, the Village early childhood coalition, and Right to Care
- Added LWVIL to fact sheets opposing Invest in Kids, and supporting a child tax credit
- Sent fiscal policy reports and requests for action to the fiscal policy google group with 100 members

KEY LEGISLATION: 2021-2023

- Earned Income Tax Credit made permanent and expanded
- Child Tax Credit not included in budget yet
- Invest in Kids Act, opposed extension
- FY 23 and FY24 budgets

SUMMARY AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE ACTIONS

LWVIL will continue to work with the Responsible Budget Coalition to gather information on what a budget that truly meets the basic human needs of Illinoisans would look like and develop a menu of possible revenues that could be raised to meet those needs. We will meet with legislative leaders and the Governor's office to advocate for fiscally responsible and fair funding to meet the state's responsibilities to fund education, healthcare, human services, and public safety. We will support pilot programs for universal income and a state child tax credit with the Cost of Living Refund Coalition. We will continue to press for an accelerated path to full education funding adequacy, and adequate funding for higher education, and the early childhood system. We will support addressing racial equity through the tax system. We support a diversified state revenue system which is equitable, progressive, stable, responsive, and simple.

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Issue Specialist: Jim McGrath

OVERVIEW

LWVIL GVP priorities are to support common sense gun legislation. GVP focus is centered on advocating for the following:

- Federal legislation covering the use and purchase of firearms at all levels of government
- Legislation to ensure firearms owners take complete responsibility for their weapons, the League supports registration of all firearms traceable to the current legal owner
- Comprehensive licensing to include gun safety training, owner fingerprinting, and background review to verify the applicant's qualifications
- Regulation and enforcement of laws covering of firearms dealers
- Advocating for restriction of or banning of the sale of automatic and semi-automatic assault style weapons to private citizens including the sale of ammunition for assault style weapons at both the state and federal levels of government

- Advocating for safe and secure storage of firearms
- Approach GVP as a public health issue

LWVIL ACTIONS: 2021- 2023

Multiple requests for Witness Slips were issued on many GVP bills sent to the GVP Google group.

Coalition work included:

- The Issues Specialist worked with several GVP advocates to form a new group “Illinois Alliance to Prevent Gun Violence”. This is an information sharing and discussion group. Members are not required to either support or oppose a bill or issue being discussed. Meetings are held on the first Monday and third Wednesday of the month. LWVIL officially joined IAPGV in May 2023.
- “Honor with Action” a new discussion forum organized by Sarah Knizhnik. Meetings include guest speakers from across the US on issues important to Illinois GVP advocates. Meetings are held every other Friday at noon. This group is for individuals GVP advocates to attend. There is no group membership.
- “Our One Aim/Our One Job” is the reincarnated and renamed version of the ILGVP group. With new leadership at this group, it appears to be returning to the informational resource that we depended on the ILGVP to provide. I am considering asking the LWVIL Board to approve officially joining this group. Meetings are typically twice per month on Monday or Thursday at noon.
- Moms Demand Action. I work with the Barrington Area Moms Demand Action (BAMDA) and follow MDA-Illinois for suggested actions on their Slack channel.

Educational presentations:

- Many GVP presentations given for organizations including LWV Northwest (Arlington Heights), LWV Palos Heights, Indivisible Rural, NWSOFA GVP, LWV Freeport, LWV Glenview tabling event at Glenview Community Church
- LWVIL Issues Briefing 2023 panel presentation focused on GVP Is a Public Health Issue. With over 40 attendees, the time allotted did not allow all questions to be answered or discussed.
- Got the LWV McHenry to speak at the McHenry County Board meeting against becoming a sanctuary county. I also spoke but as an individual.

KEY LEGISLATION: 2022-2023

HB4729 - DPH- SAFE GUN STORAGE CAMPAIGN

Amends the Department of Public Health Powers and Duties Law of the Civil Administrative Code of Illinois. Requires the Department of Public Health to develop and implement a comprehensive 2-year statewide safe gun storage public awareness campaign. Provides that the campaign shall include sustained and focused messaging over the course of the 2-year campaign period, messages paired with information about enforcement or incentives for safe gun storage, and geographic and cultural considerations. Provides that the statewide safe gun storage public awareness campaign shall be developed by the Department of Public Health subject to appropriation.

Status: Passed both houses April 7, 2022; became Public Act 102-1067 on June 10, 2022

HB5193 - GUN SAFETY INFO mandating schools to include information on safe gun storage in their handbooks.

Amends the Course of Study Article of the School Code. Provides that the safety education that school boards and other boards may provide instruction in includes safe gun storage.

Status: Passed both houses April 7, 2022; became Public Act 102-0971 on May 27, 2022

HB4383 – Ban Ghost Guns, Senate Floor Amendment No. 2

Provides that it shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly sell, offer to sell, or transfer an unserialized unfinished frame or receiver or unserialized firearm, including those produced using a three-dimensional printer, unless the party purchasing or receiving the unfinished frame or receiver or unserialized firearm is a federal firearms importer, federal firearms manufacturer, or federal firearms dealer. (More)

Status: Passed both houses April 9, 2022; became Public Act 102-0889 May 18, 2022

HB5471 Assault Weapons Ban AKA: Protecting Illinois Communities Act

Immediately ends the sale, delivery and purchase of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.

Provides a list of banned assault weapons and prohibits high-capacity magazines;

Immediately bans the possession and use of rapid-fire devices that increase the firing rate of semiautomatic weapons;

Increases the time of a Firearm Restraining Order (FRO) from six months to a year, renewable for an additional period of up to one year.

Status: Signed into Law January 10, 2023, Public Act 102-1116

HB218 Gun Industry Liability

Amends the Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act. Provides that it is an unlawful practice within the meaning of the Act for any firearm industry member, through the sale, manufacturing, importing, or marketing of a firearm-related product, to: (i) knowingly create, maintain, or contribute to a condition in Illinois that endangers the safety or health of the public by conduct either unlawful in itself or unreasonable under all circumstances, including failing to establish or utilize reasonable controls; (ii) advertise, market, or promote a firearm-related product in a manner that reasonably appears to support, recommend, or encourage individuals to engage in unlawful paramilitary or private militia activity; (iii) advertise, market, promote, design, or sell any firearm-related product in a manner that reasonably appears to support, recommend, or encourage persons under 18 years of age to unlawfully purchase or unlawfully possess or use a firearm-related product; or (iv) otherwise engage in unfair methods of competition or unfair or deceptive acts or practices declared unlawful under the Act. Provides that the provisions of the amendatory Act are severable.

Status: Passed both houses

SUMMARY AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE ACTIONS

- Work with the IDPH on the statewide Safe Storage Education program
- Join “Our One Job” coalition
- Continue to attend GVP coalition meetings and town halls for GVP status updates
- Continue to track GVP bills proposed in Springfield
- Consider updating the LWVIL “Where We Stand” positions statement
- Continue to update my GVP presentation and offer to all groups interested in learning more about the gun violence issue

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Issue Specialist: Janet Kittlaus

OVERVIEW

The General Assembly continues to uphold the automatic transfer of juveniles to adult court in serious cases instead of allowing the juvenile court to evaluate the youth. Crimes Against Humanity: The Mass Incarceration of Children in the US, reveals the full scope of the harm of prosecuting and incarcerating children as adults in the United States and includes specific data on Illinois. Still legal in Illinois is the detention of 10-year-olds in county jails even though children may not be incarcerated in juvenile prison until the age of 13. Illinois is not in compliance with United Nations (UN) Convention the Rights of the Child (CRC) and General Comment No. 24 encouraged nations to increase their minimum age of criminal responsibility to at least 14-years-old without carve-out exceptions.

LWVIL ACTION: 2021- 2023

LWVIL supported with Time for Actions (Action Alerts): SB64 in 2022.

LWVIL signed on to support these juvenile bills in 2023: HB 2128, HB2328,HB2347.

The 2023 Breakout Session at Issues Briefing: TRANSFORMING JUVENILE JUSTICE: GOOD OUTCOMES FOR ALL WITH ILLINOIS LEADING THE WAY featured Heidi Mueller, Director of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Department and Elizabeth Clarke, founder of Juvenile Justice Initiative.

LWVIL belongs to these coalitions which helps to guide our JJ advocacy:

- Final 5 Campaign is dedicated to the closure of the final 5 youth prisons in Illinois. (Does not hold meetings.)
- Juvenile Justice Initiative convenes monthly meetings for advocates providing updates and information about juvenile justice issues.

The Criminal Justice Google Group has 78 members: it is sent reports, notices of events, and requests to submit witness slips and to contact legislators and/or the governor on issues and bills pertaining to criminal justice and juvenile justice.

KEY LEGISLATION: 2021-2022

- HB 1064 (PA102-1128) provides that a person who was under the age of 21 and serving a sentence for first degree murder or a term of natural life imprisonment shall be eligible for parole review after serving 40 years or more of his or her sentence or sentences.
- HB3099 (PA102-0456) makes certain actions permissible rather than mandatory with respect to truancy, and requires the implementation of a socio-emotional focused attendance approach that targets the underlying causes of chronic truancy.
- HB3513 (PA102-0350) allows young people committed as Habitual or Violent Juvenile Offenders to earn program credits to reduce their length of stay and places them within the overall juvenile indeterminate framework, so that factors such as age, mental health needs, and progress could be taken into account when making release decisions.

- HB5016 (PA102-0966) enables youth in custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to participate in remote learning in order to complete high school and further their education.
- SB0064 (102-0100) ensures confidentiality in restorative justice practices--important should the case be referred back to the criminal court. Restorative Justice Community Courts are designed for young adults, ages 18 to 26.
- SB2122 (PA102-0101) provides that a confession made by a minor under the age of 18 during a custodial interrogation is presumptively inadmissible if the law enforcement officer “knowingly engages in deception” during the custodial interrogation

KEY LEGISLATION: 2022-2023

- HB1294 The Juvenile Fitness bill would require the courts to determine whether a youth is capable of participating in their defense after undergoing an ACES (adverse childhood experiences) assessment, and if not, the charges must be dropped. HB1294 passed the House, but failed to pass in the Senate.
- HB 2128 ends automatic transfer of juveniles for certain crimes to the criminal court. HB2128 failed to pass in the House.
- HB 2223 clarifies the jurisdiction of Illinois’ juvenile courts that children can only be charged with violations of Illinois laws. HB2223 passed both Houses and awaits the Governor’s signature.
- HB 2328 raises the age of juvenile detention from 10 to 14 and limits detention to a last resort for serious offenses. HB2328 failed to pass in the House.
- HB 2347 raises the minimum age for sentencing a child to juvenile prison from 13 to 14. HB 2347 passed the House but failed to pass in the Senate.
- HB 3140 creates the End Youth Solitary Confinement Act. HB3140 passed both Houses and awaits the Governor’s signature.
- HB 3414 provides important mitigating factors for judges to consider when sentencing serious cases involving juveniles who are also victims of trafficking and sex crimes. The bill allows judges to depart from sentencing guidelines, including mandatory minimums, or to transfer a minor offender to juvenile court for sentencing. HB3414 passed both Houses and awaits the Governor’s signature.
- SB 1463 ends Juvenile Fees and Fines in Illinois. SB1463 passed in the House but not in the Senate.
- SB 2197 expands the jurisdiction of the DJJ Ombudsperson’s office to include county-operated juvenile detention centers. SB2197 passed both Houses and awaits the Governor’s signature.

SUMMARY AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE ACTIONS

Although the Acts and bills pending the Governor’s signature represent positive juvenile legislation, Juvenile Justice Advocates must continue to strive for these reforms:

- Include emerging adults (ages 18 to 25) into a developmentally appropriate justice system in order to prevent deeper criminal involvement
- Raise the lower age for detention (in county jails) from 10 to 14
- Reform detention, using it only as a last resort and only for felony offenses
- Begin all juvenile cases in juvenile court—no automatic transfer to adult court
- Require the assistance of a lawyer during custodial interrogation for children facing the possibility of adult prosecution and sentencing
- Raise the lower age from 13 to 14 for youth to be sentenced to Juvenile Prison

- Create a minimum age of 14 for criminal responsibility in accordance with the standards set forth by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
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REDISTRICTING

Issue Specialists: Paula Lawson and Rosemary Heilemann

OVERVIEW

Drawing of State Legislative and Congressional Maps – In the year following the decennial US Census, 2021, the ILGA is required to draw state legislative and congressional maps. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic census data was delayed. The ILGA initially used American Community Survey Data (ACS) to draw legislative maps, which is not as accurate as census data and some communities were over or under-represented. LWVIL testified at State Senate and House Redistricting Committee hearings. We emphasized that census data should be used when drawing maps, that the process should be transparent, and that redistricting should be vested in an independent special commission.

Prison Gerrymandering Ban – In 2021 as part of a Criminal Justice Omnibus Bill the No Representation Without Population Act was passed. This banned the practice of counting incarcerated people at the temporary prison location for representation purposes instead of as residents of their home address. Prison gerrymandering means that communities with prisons are over-represented; the home communities of incarcerated people are under-represented. The Illinois Department of Corrections indicated that it is too difficult for them to collect home addresses. LWVIL worked for legislation that would ensure that the last-known address of people who are incarcerated will be available to state officials to use for redistricting and representation purposes.

LWVIL ACTION: 2021-2023

- Oral Testimony Oct. 2021 at 2 Senate and 3 House Redistricting Committee Hearings stating that the map drawing process lacked in equity and transparency, should be vested in an independent special commission, and should allow opportunity for public input.
- Written Testimony Oct. 2021 at House and Senate Redistricting Committee noting that the Princeton Gerrymandering Project gave the maps an F on the features they grade partisan fairness, competitiveness, and geographic features(compactness).
- Coalition work with the Illinois Redistricting Collaborative convened by CHANGE Illinois which focuses on redistricting issues.
- 3 Educational presentations to:
 - Age Options about the Census, the 2021 Redistricting process and what it means for voters in upcoming elections.
 - LWV Deerfield/Lincolnshire, IL Redistricting and Fair Maps
 - LWV Greater Rockford, “Who Represents Me Now? Illinois Redistricting and You”
- Signed Letter to Senate President Harmon asking him to call for a vote on HB1496, legislation that will facilitate the implementation of the No Representation Without Population Act by ensuring that the address information of incarcerated people will be collected.
- Lobby Day – Called on members to ask State Senators to support HB1496.

KEY LEGISLATION: 2021-2022

- PA 102-0663, State Legislative Maps Approved by the ILGA
- PA 102-0670, Congressional Maps Approved by the ILGA

KEY LEGISLATION: 2022-2023

- HB1496, No Representation Without Population Act Implementation, Passed by House and Senate, needs Governor's signature.

SUMMARY AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE ACTIONS

- While the IL House and Senate Redistricting Committees held a number of hearings, the committees were not transparent, often presented new or revised district maps at the last minute and generally did not take public input into account when drawing legislative and congressional districts. LWVIL will continue to work to make the process more transparent, allow for citizen involvement in the process and to provide for an Independent Special Commission to draw maps.
 - While it is likely that the Governor will sign HB1496 which improves collection of home addresses for implementing the No Population Without Representation Act, the process will still need to be followed to ensure that incarcerated people will be counted for the purposes of representation in their home districts.
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SCHOOLS

Issue Specialists: Ann Courter and Jean Pierce

OVERVIEW

Evidence-Based Funding: Adding state dollars through EBF has proven to be an effective way to bring schools closer to adequate and more equitable funding. In 2022, the League was advocating simply that Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) be restored to the budget after a hiatus due to COVID in 2021. In 2023, the League advocated for an increase in base-level annual funding – as high as \$900 million – though the Governor only requested \$350 M.

Invest in Kids Act: In 2023, the League advocated for sunsetting the euphemistically-named “Invest In Kids” Act (IIK) which had been added at the last minute as a compromise measure to pass EBF in 2017. IIK is a voucher system which gives public funds (income tax credits) for scholarship money donated to private schools.

Both years saw educator shortages particularly affecting special education, bilingual/English as a Second Language and support staff. Poorly-funded districts were most affected by the shortages.

Both years saw an increase in well-funded groups disrupting School Board meetings to advocate for book bans and other discriminatory practices.

Early Childhood Funding increased by \$54 M in FY2023, beginning progress toward recommendations of the 2021 Early Childhood Funding Commission.

FY 2023 budget included more than \$12 B for elementary, secondary, and higher education.

LWVIL ACTION: 2021-2023

- 8 Action Alerts Issued
- Signed on to 3 fact sheets (EBF, IIK, Minority Teaching Scholarships)
- Twice Presented Testimony about EBF to ISBE
- Co-Sponsored online forum on IIK
- 2 Issues Briefing programs (Culturally Relevant Instruction and Racism in Schools)
- 3 Round tables (School Board Disruptions)
- Coalition work with We the Village, Funding Illinois Future, Racism-Free Schools

KEY LEGISLATION: 2021-2022

- Include EBF in the Budget – Passed

KEY LEGISLATION: 2022-2023

- HB2789 Right to Read – Libraries lose funding if ban books - PASSED
- HB2792 – Increase minimum EBF to \$550M
- HB3713 Air Quality in Schools – All Classrooms must have portable air cleaners
- SB0090 Racism-Free Schools – Each district must adopt and communicate a policy on harassment based on race, color, or national origin
- Budget – Sunset IIK

SUMMARY AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE ACTIONS

This biennium LWVIL focused on promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Schools.

- EBF is an effective way of making school funding more equitable and adequate, but there is still a long way to go for 70% of our districts.
- One way to increase revenue for this program would be to sunset IIK, which uses public tax dollars to fund private schools.
- We advocated for Minority Teaching Scholarships
- We educated local Leagues about threats to DEI posed by well-funded groups disrupting school board meetings.
- At a time when Teach Plus found that over 90% of teachers have witnessed racial harassment in schools, we worked in coalition with organizations to advocate for district policies on harassment based on race, color, or national origin.

In the future:

- We will advocate for increasing Evidence-Based Funding
- LWVIL will oppose any property tax freeze undercutting school funding until the state provides closer to 50% funding
- The League will support efforts to increase funding for higher education and for early childhood education
- LWVIL will continue to support efforts to combat the teacher shortage
- We will continue to oppose efforts that would disrespect minorities in our schools

OVERVIEW

On a national level, issues surrounding water have made their way to the Supreme Court, and the current administration has revamped the meaning of “Waters of the US.”

On a state level, several issues have arisen:

- The funding for the Great Lakes needs continuous support, and LWVIL supports it regularly.
- In 2022, Illinois created a new State Water Plan for the first time in almost 40 years. This new version has an equity approach.
- Illinois is in the process of removing lead pipes per a law signed in August of 2021. The state was required to create an inventory and start removal of the pipes. The process is slow going, but the law does now require that any pipes that have a leak or a break must immediately be completely replaced.
- Pollution of the water ways can come from a variety of sources. Illinois has started to address the issues from PFAs, flushed medication, and nutrient pollution.
- With climate change has come massive flooding. Due to the dated building codes across the state, communities could not access FEMA funds to address the impacts of flooding. This is now being addressed.

LWVIL ACTION: 2021-2023

March 2021 - The League signed on to a letter from Healing Our Waters Great Lakes Coalition to support funding for the following:

- Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies (EPA and DOI, including USGS and FWS). This includes funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the DOI invasive species work and EPA clean water and water infrastructure grant programs;
- Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies (U.S. Army Corp of Engineers). This includes investment in the Brandon Road PED to protect the basin from Asian carp and in enhancing Great Lakes restoration and resiliency through research and coastal infrastructure projects.
- Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (NOAA). This includes funding for the Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab, Marine Debris, research into HABs, and several grant programs like Sea Grant and the Coastal Zone Management Grants.
- Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies (USDA and Farm Bill programs, Natural Resources Conservation Service). The NRCS programs help to reduce agricultural runoff and its impact on water quality and fight HABs.
- State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies (State Department operates the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission).

September 2022 – Urged Google Group to submit provided comments to draft Illinois Water Plan.

May 2023 – Drafted newsletter entry at request of League of Women Voters of Chicago regarding lead pipes and their impact on drinking water.

KEY LEGISLATION: 2021-2022

HB4818 – PFAs incineration ban. There is an overlap here with equity issues because there are incinerators in Metro East, which is an environmental justice. This currently only pertains to toxic release PFAs (31 chemicals), but chemicals can be added to the list.

HB 1780 – IL drug takeback. This bill makes manufacturers responsible for payment for the safe takeback of prescription drugs. Retail merchants supported manufacturer responsibility.

Budget – the budget included:

- Money for Brandon Road Project (to fight the invasive species, Asian Carp).
- Money for lead pipelines.
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) funding is set at \$12 million (increase of 500k).

KEY LEGISLATION: 2022-2023

IL SB1701 Soil & Water Conservation District. In order to address the state's shortcomings in reducing nutrient pollution from agricultural production, this legislation would better coordinate efforts between the Department of Agriculture and Soil & Water Conservation Districts to implement more voluntary conservation practices in priority watersheds. Farmer education at this level is imperative to push Illinois toward a more sustainable farming model. (Summary from IEC).

IL SB2368 Building and Residential Codes updates the requirements for construction in non-building code jurisdictions such that they comply with various building codes. (Updating these building codes would allow residents to access FEMA resources.)

IL SB2417 Flood Insurance Training would create a biennial training course for Illinois insurance producers regarding the eligibility for and availability of the National Flood Insurance Program and requires that one of the 24 hours of course study for insurance producers who are licensed in the property insurance line of authority must be related to flood insurance. [As of 5/23/2023, this bill is scheduled for a third reading, the final deadline has been pushed to May 31.]

[As of 5/23/2023, a final budget has not been passed.]

SUMMARY AND ANTICIPATED FUTURE ACTIONS

On a national level, the rules around regulating water are in flux; there is a struggle between the judiciary and the executive branches about which water can be regulated by the federal government.

Illinois has started addressing some of the issues necessary to protect the water and the people impacted by flooding. It is anticipated that there will be more work around the coal ash issue in Waukegan, environmental justice, flooding and water conservation.