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LETTER FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

September 2017

Dear Members of the Illinois General Assembly,

We submit to you the 2017 Annual Report of the Illinois Commission on the Elimination of Poverty. As in past years, we provide an overview of the legislative progress our state has made toward efforts to cut poverty. Despite the numerous legislative proposals introduced this year that addressed poverty, few advanced.

While Illinois did finally pass a budget, the damage from the protracted budget battles has been done, funding for key programs that address poverty remains at risk, and many individuals and families facing extreme poverty are still facing steep barriers to opportunity. As we move our attention to 2018, we must focus on creating an Illinois that fulfills the promises laid out in Illinois’s constitution, to eliminate poverty and inequality.

With a renewed focus and great effort we know we can make significant progress toward cutting extreme poverty in Illinois. We call on you, the General Assembly, and leaders throughout the state to work with us to create real solutions for Illinois.

Sincerely,

Members of the Commission on the Elimination of Poverty
Introduction

Each year, the Illinois Commission on the Elimination of Poverty ("the Commission") identifies and monitors proposals introduced in the General Assembly aim to reduce poverty. Over 670,000 people in Illinois are still living in extreme poverty. For a family of 3, that means living on less than $9,387 per year. People living in extreme poverty struggle to keep a roof over their heads, put food on the table, meet their most basic human needs and provide for their families each and every day. While Illinois has taken some significant, and often creative, steps that will help improve the lives of people living in extreme poverty, the lingering budget crisis and political rancor has often meant that Illinois is taking even bigger steps backward.

Illinois’s precarious budget situation has resulted in program closures and service cuts across the state, often impacting those experiencing poverty most. Even after the General Assembly passed its first budget in two years, resources remain scarce, impacted service providers will have difficulty regaining their footing, and for some individuals and families experiencing poverty who benefit from these programs- opportunities and stability have been permanently lost.

This year, the Commission identified thirty-one bills introduced in the General Assembly that respond to the needs of those experiencing poverty. While this represents a marked increase from the number of bills introduced last year, only seven pieces of legislation ultimately passed out of both chambers and were signed into law.

This report summarizes each of these pieces of legislation and their progress. With the residual impact of the budget impasse and the looming risk of federal budget threats to critical safety net programs, Illinois needs to take action to ensure that the state does not fall further behind in its efforts to cut poverty and meet the needs of all Illinoisans.
Measuring Progress

Extreme poverty is defined as living in a household with an income below 50% of the federal poverty threshold. Illinois is following, albeit more slowly, the national trend with a reduction in extreme poverty in the past few years. Poverty level, however, remains significantly higher than before the Great Recession and Illinois’s gains have been less dramatic than the rest of the nation. The estimates presented in this section come from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement. While there are several valid sources of data on extreme poverty, this source allows for a more comprehensive picture, which provides a better benchmark for measuring Illinois’s progress toward reducing poverty.

A SNAPSHOT OF EXTREME POVERTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Extremely Poor</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>607,247</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013-2014</td>
<td>750,457</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>711,488</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>671,370</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A CLOSER LOOK AT EXTREME POVERTY IN ILLINOIS

Extreme Poverty by Race/Ethnicity
(Extreme poverty disproportionately affects people and communities of color)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>2017 Current Situation</th>
<th>Percent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>277,086</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>205,443</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>134,871</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Data Source: Social IMPACT Research Center’s analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey’s Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Microdata. Based on Census Bureau recommendations on proper data use, these estimates are 2-year averages (2008 includes 2007 and 2008; 2013 includes 2012 and 2013) to help smooth out variation due to small sample size. For information on poverty in local Illinois communities, visit www.ilpovertyreport.org

* Percent represents the percentage of people in the demographic group who are extremely poor. Percentages do not add up to 100 because race and ethnicity are not mutually exclusive.
### Extreme Poverty by Age
(Children are more likely to live in extreme poverty than adults)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>2017 Current Situation</th>
<th>Percent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children (0-17)</td>
<td>228,344</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Age (18-64)</td>
<td>386,418</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors (65 and over)</td>
<td>56,609</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Extreme Poverty by Disability Status
(Working-age Illinoisans with a work-limiting disability have much higher rates of extreme poverty than their non-disabled counterparts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability Status (Working Age)</th>
<th>2017 Current Situation</th>
<th>Percent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With a Work-Limiting Disability</td>
<td>77,800</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Work-Limiting Disability</td>
<td>388,915</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Extreme Poverty by Work Limitation
(Over half of all Illinoisans in extreme poverty are children, seniors, or working-age people with a work limiting disability – people who cannot or are not expected to work)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unable or Not Expected to Work</th>
<th>2017 Current Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a % of Those in Extreme Poverty</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percent represents the percentage of people in the demographic group who are extremely poor.
Budget Overview

Illinois saw the longest budget impasse in the nation’s history and the crisis it caused will have consequences for years to come. With a budget and new revenue package, Illinois has slowed its decline. But the existing budget is still inadequate to meet the needs of the people of Illinois and will mean a long, slow road to recovery for programs and services that address poverty and the people that they serve. Institutions of higher education and other avenues of opportunity for Illinoisans have sustained long-term damage, reducing staff and making difficult financial choices to survive. While Illinois’s budget pressures may look different than last year, it will take strategic and thoughtful steps to put Illinois back on the track to fiscal health and a community where its residents can thrive.

As Illinois looks toward a long-term recovery from our budget crisis, it must continue to support, with adequate revenue, programs and services that address extreme poverty and create opportunity, tackle the nearly $15 billion in back bills that are weighing down the state budget and preventing providers and other vendors throughout the state from stabilizing, and make budgetary decisions that look beyond a single budget cycle, toward long-term stability for Illinois residents.

While Illinois struggles in the wake of its budget impasse, there is a looming threat of substantial cuts to the federal programs that address poverty. The President’s proposed budget includes trillions of dollars of cuts from programs that help Illinoisans afford the basics such as food and health care, as well as resources that keep families safe and build strong local communities. Illinois’s persistent disinvestment in programs and services during much of the last decade will make it harder for Illinois residents experiencing poverty to meet their most basic needs as they navigate changing federal programs and resources. Should Congress adopt these proposed cuts to federally funded programs like Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Illinois will be especially devastated.

As we look forward to 2018, Illinois must build on the stability that a more sound budget provides and take targeted steps to address poverty and a more resilient Illinois.
Listening Sessions

Each year the Commission holds public hearings or listening sessions to hear directly from people experiencing poverty and to learn more about issues impacting communities throughout the state. The information gathered during these sessions helps inform the Commission’s priorities in the coming year and this report.

This year, members of the Commission on the Elimination of Poverty and the Illinois Commission to End Hunger focused on the growing issue of hunger on college campuses. Commissioners visited the Wesley Evening Pantry at the University of Illinois – Champaign Urbana and spoke with student volunteers and pantry staff to learn more about their efforts to address hunger. The following themes emerged:

**The cost of higher education has dramatically increased:** The cost of college in real terms doubled and family incomes over the same period have actually gone down creating an affordability gap. Food insecurity is a symptom of the tuition hike. In the 80s and 90s, students could work in the summer and their wages would pay for the next year of college. There are not enough hours in the day for students to make this happen today.

**Stigma:** Great stigma is attached to food insecurity, particularly on college campuses. Many students experiencing hunger do not view the food pantry as a resource for them, but for other community members, and are reluctant to show up at the pantry. Calling the pantry a student market, organizing events with free food or community meals, and creating shelves with food items at other locations on campus might be ways to connect students with the food assistance they need while reducing stigma. Storytelling and sharing among peers is often the strongest tool to break down stigma.

**Certain groups of students exhibit high need:** Graduate students and international students often face particular challenges in making ends meet. International students often aren’t able to work while they are going to school, so extra income from a part time job just isn’t an option. Many international students are receiving financial aid to attend school but it does not adequately cover all of their costs, including food. They don’t have the safety net and familial support that “traditional students” have. Similarly, graduate students are frequently living without parental financial support and may also be limited in their ability to work outside the classroom or laboratory.

**Institutional buy-in can help connect students with resources:** Educating campus faculty and staff on the availability of food assistance can help to ensure
that students are directed to those resources as challenges arise throughout the year. Instructors, coaches, and student services providers are all in a position to inform students and encourage them to take advantage of the available supports.

**Peer-to-peer outreach is effective:** Students are more likely to share their struggles with other students or associate professors. Student ambassadors or liaisons could go a long way in getting the word out about the pantry and helping connect students experiencing food insecurity with assistance.

**Food insecurity is no joke:** Too many people, including decision-makers, school administrators and others, joke about starving college students living on Ramen noodles as opposed to taking food insecurity seriously. Education around poverty, homelessness and food insecurity is needed on campus and within the community if we want to take meaningful steps to truly address hunger and poverty.

**The college experience today is very different than years past:** Many students are not being supported by family members financially and are actually working to send home money to support siblings and contribute to household expenses. Single parents are working and going to school, often at community colleges and managing the responsibilities of raising children. Yesterday’s non-traditional student is today’s traditional college student.

**University staff are using the food pantry:** More and more schools are using adjunct professors rather than tenured professors, and those professors rarely receive benefits or a living wage. Support staff, such as custodial staff, consistently use the pantry as well. During the budget crisis pantry staff at some institutions reported a spike in use among university staff and professors, particularly at universities where furloughs were used to address budget shortfalls.

**Financial aid:** The financial aid that students are receiving in the form of scholarships and other supports is not adequately covering the full cost of attending school. Grants and waivers often cover tuition and fees but not lodging, meal plans, or books, leaving students to cover significant unmet costs—and unsure about where their next meal is coming from.

**Students saddled with debt:** Parents and students are taking on enormous amounts of debt that will follow them around in some cases for the rest of their lives. Students who borrow extensively for college but go into modestly-compensated fields like social work or teaching may never be able to own a home or pay off their loans. Both the lack of financial literacy and college affordability are huge problems.
**Food is foundational**: Ensuring that students have enough food to eat is an investment in our community and investment in the future. Hunger can be a major barrier to learning and academic success. Adding to the daily stress most college students already experience, the stress that comes from food insecurity often lowers educational participation and decreases the probability that a student will achieve his or her academic goals. Being hungry simply makes it harder to learn. Students should not be forced to drop out of school because they can't afford to eat and pay for their education.
The Commission’s Recommendations

In 2010, the Commission on the Elimination of Poverty created a comprehensive strategy for cutting extreme poverty. Relying on public input, relevant data, and research, the Commission developed a comprehensive approach to address the complex and multi-faceted nature of poverty. The recommendations contained within that plan relate to the following:

- Access to safe, decent, and affordable housing
- Access to adequate food and nutrition
- Access to affordable and quality health care
- Equal access to quality education and training
- Dependable and affordable transportation
- Access to quality and affordable child care
- Opportunities to engage in meaningful and sustainable work
- The availability of adequate income supports.

Per the Commission’s statutory mandate, the recommendations are grounded in international human rights standards. The commissioners applied human rights principles and a solid understanding of those impacted by extreme poverty to guide the development of the plan and continue to apply those principles to their work.

The information that follows offers an overview of legislative action taken this year that aligned with the Poverty Commission’s recommendations to cut extreme poverty.

Please note that while there is consensus among Commissioners about the recommendations above, and each of the following bills attempts to address some facet of this complex problem, individual members of the Commission may hold different opinions on the effectiveness of specific strategies listed in the following pages.
Agenda for Change – 2017 Summary

HB3370 – Affordable College Financing
Creates a pilot program to provide loans to 400 eligible students to attend State universities and requires the loans be repaid based on income six months after the borrower leaves school: LOSING GROUND

HB3498 – Community College Free Tuition
Provides free tuition at designated community colleges, funded by the Community College Free Tuition Trust Fund: LOSING GROUND

HB3900 – Community Colleges – Tuition Waiver
Allows all eligible high school graduates to attend any community college in the State without paying tuition or the cost of books: LOSING GROUND

SB1897 – Higher Education – Tuition Reduction
Requires Illinois universities to reimburse its full-time resident undergraduate students a portion of the tuition: LOSING GROUND

HB2394 – Higher Education – In State Student Aid
Will provide legal authority to four year public universities in Illinois to provide financial aid to undocumented Illinois students who enroll at their institutions. Also allows access to other publicly funded aid other than MAP: LOSING GROUND

HB2663 – Early Childhood Program – Expulsion
Limits early childhood programs use of expulsion and prescribes intervention strategies on providing staff training and technical support: MAKING PROGRESS

SB1614 & HB3177 – License to Work Act
Prohibits driver’s license suspension for non-moving violations unrelated to bad driving: LOSING GROUND

SB1706 – Car Insurance Fairness
Prohibits the use of credit scores in determining car insurance rates: LOSING GROUND
HB0721 – Child Care – Income Threshold
Increases the income threshold for eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program to 185% of the federal poverty level: LOSING GROUND

HB3213 – Child Care – Education/Training
Allows families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to access child care assistance for the purposes of participating in education and training activities: MAKING PROGRESS

HB690 – Day and Temporary Laborers
Improves working conditions for day and temporary workers by strengthening requirements and oversight of agencies and third party employers: MAKING PROGRESS

HB665 – Negligent Hiring Protections for Employers
Limits actions against employers due to hiring an employee who has been convicted of a criminal offense: LOSING GROUND

SB1720 – Anti-Wage Theft in State Contracting
Prohibits any person or business that violates State statute or regulation that governs the payment of wages to do business with the State or any state agency (directly or as a subcontractor) for a period of five years: LOSING GROUND

HB2351 – Wage Lien Act
Establishes a lien on an employer’s property for the amount of unpaid wages owed to an employee in cases of wage theft: LOSING GROUND

HB2462 – Equal Pay Act – Wage History
Makes it unlawful to request wage history in the hiring or screening process to reduce salary discrimination: LOSING GROUND

HB2771 – Healthy Work Place Act
Allows all employees to earn up to five paid sick days a year: LOSING GROUND

SB1721 – Family Leave Insurance Act
Allows employees to take up to 12 weeks of family leave within any 24-month period for the purpose of providing care for the birth of a child, adoption of a child, placement of a foster child, or one's own serious health condition or that of a family member: LOSING GROUND
HB2373 – Expand Record Sealing Eligibility
Expands eligibility for sealing of criminal records to a broader number of convictions, helping people with criminal records avoid barriers to opportunity: MAKING PROGRESS

SB1688 – Probationary Licenses
Ensures that mitigating factors and rehabilitation be taken into account when applying for a professional license (or permit): MAKING PROGRESS

HB3895 – Diaper Bill
Creates a program to support families in extreme poverty with a monthly diaper allowance of $80 for each child under age three: LOSING GROUND

HB2475 – Increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit
Increases the amount of the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit to 20% of the federal tax credit: MAKING PROGRESS

HB3691 – Universal Children’s Savings Accounts
Provides a seeded college savings account at birth for every child born in Illinois and encourages savings by offering a matched savings incentive for low and moderate-income families: LOSING GROUND

SB1246 – Savings Account Protection
Protects ABLE accounts and 529 college savings accounts from debt collection attempts, ensuring financial security and opportunity for Illinois families while they pay off any debts: LOSING GROUND

HB2843 & SB1704 – Rights for Survivors of Human Trafficking
Expands the right of survivors of trafficking to vacate any criminal convictions that stem from the survivor’s exploitation: LOSING GROUND

SB1331 – Human Rights – Source of Income
Creates a civil rights violation for an owner or any other person engaging in a real estate transaction to discriminate based on source of income: LOSING GROUND
HB3211 – College Student Hunger
Extends eligibility for SNAP to community college students enrolled in career and technical education certificate or degree programs: LOSING GROUND

HB3215 – Feminine Hygiene Products in Schools
Requires all school districts to make feminine hygiene products available, at no cost to students, in the bathrooms of school buildings: MAKING PROGRESS

Increase the Minimum Wage (Monitor SB0081)
Helps move more low-wage workers out of poverty by increasing the minimum wage: LOSING GROUND

Higher Education Ban the Box (Monitor HB3142)
Prohibits colleges and universities from asking or considering a person’s criminal record during the admissions process: LOSING GROUND
Progress towards the Commission’s Recommendations
Equal access to quality education and training

HB3370 – Affordable College Financing
LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – HB3370 creates the Affordable College Financing Pilot Program Act. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission would implement and administer a program to provide loans to 400 eligible students to attend Illinois universities. The repayment of the loans should begin six months after the borrower leaves school and on an income-based schedule. The bill specifies calculations for the loan and repayment terms. The Illinois Student Assistance Commission would be required to submit progress reports to the General Assembly, which must include average cumulative debt, year-to-year student retention, and report the progress of borrowers throughout the repayment period.

2017 OUTCOME – HB3370 was introduced by Representative Elgie Sims and assigned to the House Revenue & Finance Committee and referred to the Growth, Reform & Fairness Subcommittee. No further action was taken on the bill.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –
Increase equal access to quality education and training: The pilot established by the bill is meant to test an additional financing model to help students to pursue their college education. The income based repayment option is intended to ensure that a borrower’s monthly payments will be affordable.
HB3498 – Community College Free Tuition

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – As introduced, HB3498 would require that the Illinois Community College Board establish and implement a program that provides tuition to the first 1,500 students per year that enroll at each designated community college. The program designates sixteen community colleges for a 2-year period on a rotating schedule determined by the Illinois Community College Board. The Community College Free Tuition Trust Fund as a non-appropriated trust fund will be created and held outside the State Treasury. Every bank under the Act and every credit union must pay into the Trust Fund.

2017 OUTCOME – HB3498 was introduced by Representative Thaddeus Jones was assigned to the House Community College Access & Affordability Committee. An amendment was filed that would re-target this program, focusing not simply on those first to enroll at that year’s participating colleges, but on students working to complete high school equivalency while co-enrolled in credit-bearing career and technical education degree or certificate programs. The amendment was not adopted. No further action has been taken.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –

Increase equal access to quality education and training: The bill is intended to put community college in reach for students who may otherwise not be able to pursue higher education.
HB3900 – Community Colleges – Tuition Waiver

LOISING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – HB3900 would allow high-performing Chicago Public Schools graduates to attend any community college in the State without paying tuition or the cost of books. Costs shall only be waived after any available federal student aid is applied. Eligible student is defined as a student who has graduated from the Chicago school district with a grade point average of at least 3.0 and who has tested as completion-ready in English language arts and mathematics.

2017 OUTCOME – HB3900 was introduced by Representative Justin Slaughter. It was assigned to the House Community College Access & Affordability Committee. No further action has been taken.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED – Increase equal access to quality education and training: Often the cost of college hinders Illinoisans’ ability to attend. In Chicago, the City Colleges have therefore established the Chicago Star Scholarship to allow high-performing CPS graduates to attend without paying for tuition or books. This bill would provide additional choices for students who qualify for the Chicago Star Scholarship, allowing them to select a community college outside the City Colleges system, regardless of financial means or location within Illinois.
SB1897 – Higher Education – Tuition Reduction

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – SB1897 creates the Tuition Reduction Act beginning with the 2017-2018 academic year. It requires each public university located in this State to reimburse its full-time resident undergraduate students a portion of the tuition charged in the form of a grant applied directly to a student’s financial aid account. The per-pupil grant amount shall be calculated by the university as the difference, if any, between the current fiscal year’s aggregate appropriations to the university and fiscal year 2015’s aggregate appropriations to the university and divide that amount by the number of students enrolled in the previous academic year. Half of this calculation then equals the per-pupil grant amount, to be awarded to currently enrolled students to reduce their tuition costs (unless the current fiscal year’s aggregate appropriations to the university are equal to or less than fiscal year 2015’s aggregate appropriations). Each university would need to report annually the updated estimates of the total amount in grants awarded in an academic year to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the General Assembly.

2017 OUTCOME – SB1897 was introduced by Senator Pat McGuire assigned to the Senate Higher Education Committee and referred to the Subcommittee on Public Higher Education Administrative Costs, Tuition and Fees. No further action has been taken.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –

Increase equal access to quality education and training: This bill is intended to address affordability by requiring that when public universities receive increased appropriations, a portion of the increased funding is applied to student tuition and fee costs.
HB2394 – Higher Education – In State Student Aid

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – HB2394 would allow a student who meets the requirements for being an Illinois resident for tuition purposes to be eligible to apply or receive consideration for any student aid or benefit funded or administered by the various institutions. This includes the State, State agencies, public institutions, or the university, and the monetary benefit would include scholarships, grants, awards, stipends, room and board, tuition waivers, or other financial or in-kind assistance, but would exclude Monetary Award Program grants. The bill also prohibits each university and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission from denying a scholarship, grant, or loan to a person who has been convicted of illegal possession or sale of cannabis, controlled substances, or methamphetamine if he or she otherwise qualifies for the scholarship, grant, or loan.

2017 OUTCOME – HB2394 was introduced by Representative Elizabeth Hernandez and passed out of the House Higher Education Committee. No further action was taken.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –

Increase equal access to quality education and training: Increasing access to financial aid would help put higher education within reach for students who are currently unable to afford to continue their education.
HB3691 – Universal Children’s Savings Accounts

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – HB3691 provides a seeded college savings account at birth for every child born in Illinois and encourages savings by offering a matched savings incentive for low and moderate-income families.

2017 OUTCOME – HB3691 was introduced by Representative Robyn Gabel and sponsored by Senator Kimberly Lightford in the Senate. The bill passed both Houses and was amended in the Senate. No further action was taken on the bill.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –

Increase scholarships, financial aid and student supports for low-income college students: College savings accounts provide an important savings tool for families and will help put college in reach for more low-income students.
(Monitor) HB3142 – Higher Education Ban the Box
LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – HB3142 prohibits colleges and universities from asking or considering a person’s criminal record during the admissions process. The bill does not prohibit a college or university from asking about a student’s record for purposes of guidance, counseling, housing, or campus activities.

2017 OUTCOME – SB0081 was introduced by Representative Barbara Wheeler and sponsored by Senator Pat McGuire in the Senate. The bill passed out of the House and was assigned to the Senate Criminal Law Committee. No further action has been taken on the bill.
Access to quality and affordable child care

HB2663 – Early Childhood Program – Expulsion

MAKING PROGRESS

BILL SUMMARY – HB2663 prohibits the use of expulsion in early childhood programs receiving State Board of Education grants for preschool educational programs. The types of programs include licensed day care centers, day care homes, and group day care homes. When persistent and serious challenging behaviors emerge, the early childhood program shall document steps taken to ensure that the child can participate safely in the program and utilize a range of community resources. A transition plan is included if there is documented evidence that all available interventions and supports recommended by a qualified professional have been exhausted.

2017 OUTCOME – HB2663 was introduced by Juliana Stratton. The bill passed both Houses and was signed into law by the Governor on August 14, 2017. (PUBLIC ACT 100-0105).

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –
Increase equal access to quality education and training: Children of color have been disproportionately affected by the use of suspension and expulsion and it is often inappropriate in an early childhood setting. Providing additional training and supports to early childhood professionals and limiting the use of expulsion will help improve access to quality education and training for Illinois children.
HB0721 – Child Care-Income Threshold

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – HB0721 increases the income threshold for eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program to 185% of the current federal poverty level for each family size.

2017 OUTCOME – HB0721 was introduced by Representative Melissa Conyears-Ervin and assigned to the House Appropriations – Human Services Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –
*Increase access to quality and affordable child care:* The Child Care Assistance Program allows low-income families experiencing poverty the ability to access quality child care. Access to affordable child care is often essential for maintaining employment.
HB3213 – Child Care – Education/Training

MAKING PROGRESS

BILL SUMMARY – HB3213 allows families that are income-eligible for child care assistance, are not recipients of TANF, and need child care assistance to participate in education and training activities. The bill requires the Department of Human Services to specify the conditions of eligibility for the test program.

2017 OUTCOME – HB2313 was introduced by Representative Litesa Wallace. The bill passed both Houses and was signed into law by the Governor on August, 25, 2017 (PUBLIC ACT 100-0387).

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –

*Increase access to quality and affordable child care:* Allowing families to participate in employment and training activities and still receive child care assistance will allow parents to gain skills and be better positioned to get a job when one becomes available.
Dependable and affordable transportation

SB1614 & HB3177 – License to Work Act
LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – SB1614 & HB3177 prohibits driver’s license suspension for non-moving violations including for failure to satisfy fines or penalties for failure to pay parking tickets or tollway violations.

2017 OUTCOME – SB1614 was introduced by Senator Omar Aquino and assigned to the Senate Criminal Law Committee. HB3177 was introduced by Representative Elaine Nekritz and assigned to the House Transportation: Vehicles & Safety Committee. No further action was taken on either bill.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –
Increase dependable and affordable transportation: The vast majority of Illinoisans drive to work and a license is required just to apply for many jobs. Licenses suspension limits access to work and is not an appropriate consequence when drivers can’t afford to pay tickets fines or fees or for reasons unrelated to driving.
SB1706 – Car Insurance Fairness

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – SB1706 prohibits the use of credit scores in determining car insurance rates.

2017 OUTCOME – SB1706 was introduced by Senator Jacqueline Collins and assigned to the Senate Insurance Committee and referred to the Subcommittee on Auto Insurance Rates. No further action was taken on the bill.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –
Increase dependable and affordable transportation: Auto insurance is mandatory in the State and this bill makes auto insurance more affordable for Illinois drivers.
Opportunities to engage in meaningful and sustainable work

HB690 – Day and Temporary Laborers

MAKING PROGRESS

BILL SUMMARY – HB690 improves working conditions for day and temporary workers and holds agencies accountable. Day and temporary laborers must be notified in writing of schedules, be made aware of fees charged to their employers, paid consistent with employees doing same job, and be provided transportation back to place of employment after the work day. Temporary agencies need to report the number of permanent placements among other requirements.

2017 OUTCOME – HB690 was introduced by Representative Carol Ammons. The bill passed both Houses and was signed into law by Governor Rauner on September 22, 2017 (PUBLIC ACT 100-0517)

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –
Increase standards and regulation of staffing agencies, protecting domestic/temporary/migrant workers from abuse and exploitation: Improving employment protections for day and temporary laborers would increase opportunity for workers.
HB665 – Negligent Hiring Protections for Employers

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – HB665 prohibits a cause of action from being brought against a party solely for hiring an employee or independent contractor who has been convicted of a nonviolent, non-sexual offense.

2017 OUTCOME – HB0665 was introduced by Representative Thomas Morrison. The bill was assigned to the House Labor & Commerce Committee and referred to the Workforce Reconciliation Subcommittee. No further action was taken on the bill.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –

*Increase opportunities to engage in meaningful and sustainable work*: Providing employers who hire people with criminal backgrounds with added protection against negligent hiring claims will increases opportunities for people with criminal records seeking employment.
SB1720 – Anti-Wage Theft in State Contracting

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – SB1720 prohibits any person or business that violates the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act, the Minimum Wage Law, the Illinois Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, the Employee Classification Act, the Day and Temporary Labor Services Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, or any comparable state statute or regulation of any state which governs the payment of wages to do business with the State or any State agency or enter into a subcontract that is subject to the Code for a period of five years. Includes that an employer that is able to pay wages and who refuses to pay is guilty of a Class 4 felony with respect to amounts of $5,000 or less (rather than a Class B misdemeanor) and of a Class 3 felony with respect to amounts greater than $5,000 (rather than a Class A misdemeanor).

2017 OUTCOME – SB1720 was introduced by Senator Daniel Biss and sponsored by Rep. Elizabeth Hernandez in the House. The bill passed both Houses and was vetoed by the Governor on August 25, 2017.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED – Ensure that workers have protections against wage theft, including access to hearings and increased penalties for employers: The state of Illinois can increase protections for workers by increasing penalties against state contracted employers who do not follow the law and adequately pay their workers.
HB2351 – Wage Lien Act

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – HB2351 would allow a lien on an employer's property for the amount of unpaid wages owed to an employee. The bill defines terms and includes provisions concerning creation of the lien; exemptions; notice; limitations; recording of the lien; enforcement; other claims on the employer's property; successor obligations; and construction.

2017 OUTCOME – HB2351 was introduced by Representative Barbara Flynn Currie and passed out of the House Labor & Commerce Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED – Ensure that workers have protections against wage theft, including access to hearings and increased penalties for employers: Increasing penalties against employers for non-payment of wages would help ensure that employees get paid for work they perform and have recourse in the event that they do not.
HB2462 – Equal Pay Act – Wage History

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – HB2462 prohibits 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, and (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.

2017 OUTCOME – HB2462 was introduced by Representative Anna Moeller and sponsored by Senator Daniel Biss in the Senate. The bill passed out of both Houses and was vetoed by the Governor on August 25, 2017.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED – Improve workplace compensation: Prohibiting employers from asking about salary history in the hiring process promotes equal pay for equal work regardless of gender or race.
**HB2771 – Healthy Work Place Act**

**LOSENG GROUND**

**BILL SUMMARY** – HB2771 creates the Healthy Workplace Act. It requires employers to provide up to five paid sick days to employees. The bill sets forth the purposes for and manner in which the sick days may be used. HB2771 also authorizes the imposition of civil penalties on noncompliant employers and allows individuals to file civil actions with respect to violations.

**2017 OUTCOME** – HB2771 was introduced by Representative Christian Mitchell and sponsored by Senator Toi Hutchinson in the Senate. The bill passed both Houses but was amended and the motion to concur was lost in the House. No further action was taken on this bill.

**COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED** – Adopt the Healthy Workplace Act that allows employees who traditionally do not have a right to paid sick leave to accrue sick days: Workers often have to choose between going to work sick and risking their health or taking a day off and risking their paycheck or even their job. All workers should have access to paid sick days.
SB1721 – Family Leave Insurance Act

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – SB1721 creates the Family Leave Insurance Act allowing an employee to take up to 12 weeks of family leave within any 24-month period for the purpose of providing care for the birth of a child, adoption of a child or placement of a foster child, or one’s own serious health condition or that of a family member. The bill establishes terms and conditions for taking leave, and authorizes compensation for the family leave to be paid from the State Benefits Fund, a special fund created in the State treasury.

2017 OUTCOME – SB1721 was introduced by Senator Daniel Biss and assigned to the Senate Labor Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –

*Increase workplace compensation and benefit standards*: No one should have to make the choice between caring for child or family member and a job.
HB2373 – Expand Record Sealing Eligibility

MAKING PROGRESS

BILL SUMMARY – HB2373 expands the sealing of records in Illinois so that, unless there is a specific exception, that record is sealable. The bill does not allow sealing of felony records in areas that the General Assembly has historically excluded – driving under the influence, domestic violence, harm to animals and sexual assault. Individuals can petition to seal their records three years after the end of their last sentence. If the individual is on the Arsonist Registration Act, or the Murderer and Violent Offender Against Youth Registration Act, however, he or she must wait until they are no longer required to register.

2017 OUTCOME – HB2373 was introduced by Representative Camille Lilly. The bill passed both Houses and was signed into law by the Governor on August 24, 2017. (PUBLIC ACT 100-0284).

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED – Use the state’s leadership to encourage and promote the hiring of individuals with criminal backgrounds: Expanding the convictions eligible for sealing promotes more opportunities for employment and reduces discrimination based on criminal record.
SB1688 – Probationary Licenses

MAKING PROGRESS

BILL SUMMARY – SB1688 requires the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation to consider certain mitigating factors and evidence of rehabilitation for certain applicants of licenses, certificates, and registrations. Upon denial of a license, certificate, or registration, the Department needs to provide the applicant certain information concerning the denial.

2017 OUTCOME – SB1688 was introduced by Senator Kwame Raoul. The bill passed both Houses and was signed into law by the Governor on August 24, 2017. (PUBLIC ACT 100-0286).

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED – Use the state’s leadership to encourage and promote the hiring of individuals with criminal records: Reducing barriers to obtaining occupational licenses and certificates will increase employment opportunities for people with criminal backgrounds.
HB2843 & SB1704 – Rights for Survivors of Human Trafficking

**LOSING GROUND**

**BILL SUMMARY** – HB2843 & SB1704 allows survivors of human trafficking to vacate convictions that were the result of their exploitation.

**2017 OUTCOME** – HB2843 was introduced by Representative Ann Williams and assigned to the House Judiciary – Criminal Committee. SB1704 was introduced by Senator Toi Hutchinson and assigned to the Senate Criminal Law Committee. No further action was taken on either bill.

**COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED** – *Ensure that individuals have their basic needs met and their dignity affirmed:* Allowing survivors of human trafficking to vacate convictions that were a direct result of human trafficking will allow survivors to rebuild their lives without a criminal conviction which could serve as a barrier to jobs, housing, education and other opportunities.
(Monitor) SB0081 – Increase the Minimum Wage

**LOSING GROUND**

**BILL SUMMARY** – SB0081 increases the minimum wage for an employee who is 18 years of age or older as follows:

- $9 per hour from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018; to
- $10 per hour from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019; to
- $11.25 from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020; to
- $13 per hour from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021; and to
- $15 per hour on and after January 1, 2022.

The minimum wage for an employee who is under 18 years of age that has not worked more than 650 hours for an employer during any calendar year shall be paid:

- $8 per hour from January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018; $8.50 per hour from January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019; $9.25 per hour from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020; $10.50 per hour from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021; and $12 per hour on and after January 1, 2022.

**2017 OUTCOME** – SB0081 was introduced by Senator Kimberly Lightford and sponsored by Representative Will Guzzardi in the House. The bill passed both Houses and was vetoed by the Governor on August 25, 2017.
The availability of adequate income supports.

HB3895 – Diaper Bill

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – HB3895 provides eligible families a diaper allowance of $80 per month per child. The qualifying conditions are: (i) the person’s household income is at or below 50% of the federal poverty guidelines; (ii) the person is responsible for the welfare of a child three years of age or younger; and (iii) the child who is three years of age or younger receives medical assistance under the Illinois Public Aid Code.

2017 OUTCOME – HB3895 was introduced by Representative Robyn Gabel and assigned to the House Appropriations – Human Services Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –

Increase the availability of adequate income supports: Ensuring that families are able to access an adequate supply of diapers improves child and maternal health.
HB2475 – Increase in the Earned Income Tax Credit

MAKING PROGRESS

BILL SUMMARY – HB2475 gradually increases the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) to 20% of the federal tax credit over four years.

2017 OUTCOME – HB2475 was introduced by Representative Barbara Flynn Currie. The bill was assigned to the House Revenue & Finance Committee and referred to the Growth, Reform & Fairness Subcommittee. No further action was taken on the bill however a proposal to increase the EITC was included in the budget bill. With the budget bills passage, the EITC increases from 10% (of the federal credit) to 14% in FY17 and 18% in FY18.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED – *Triple the state Earned Income Tax Credit*: The EITC allows families to supplement their income providing more money for working families to meet their basic needs.
SB1246 – Savings Account Protection

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – SB1246 protects savings from debt collection, particularly 529 college savings accounts and ABLE accounts.

2017 OUTCOME – SB1246 was introduced by Senator Scott Bennett and referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –

*Increase the availability of adequate income supports*: For those experiencing extreme poverty, the ability to save for college or support a family member with a disability can be important to creating long-term stability.
HB3215 – Feminine Hygiene Products in Schools

**MAKING PROGRESS**

**BILL SUMMARY** – HB3215 requires schools to make feminine hygiene products available, at no cost to students, in the bathrooms of school buildings. The requirement also applies to charter schools.

**2017 OUTCOME** – HB3215 was introduced by Representative Litesa Wallace and sponsored by Senator Mattie Hunter in the Senate. The bill passed both Houses and was signed into law by the Governor on August 18, 2017. ([PUBLIC ACT 100-0163](http://legis.state.il.us/ huisenr/:A071100163)).

**COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED** – *Equal access to quality education and training*: Students living in poverty should have the same access to hygiene products as their peers. Providing feminine hygiene products in school can prevent female students who are experiencing poverty from missing school during their menstrual cycle.
Access to adequate food and nutrition

HB3211 – College Student Hunger

LOSEING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – HB3211 uses flexibility offered by the federal program to extend Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility to low-income adults pursuing a “Perkins Pathway” career and technical education (CTE) certificate or degree program at a community college. The bill also establishes a process by which the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) would identify and notify students who may be eligible for SNAP.

2017 OUTCOME – HB3211 was introduced by Representative Litesa Wallace and sponsored by Senator Julie Morrison in the Senate. The Governor issued an amendatory veto on August 18, 2017, striking the section of the bill that would require ISAC to identify and notify potentially eligible college students.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –

*Increase access to adequate food and nutrition:* Hunger can be a major barrier to learning and academic success. Students experiencing poverty should have equal opportunity to succeed.
Access to safe, decent, and affordable housing

SB1331 – Human Rights – Source of Income

LOSING GROUND

BILL SUMMARY – SB1331 prohibits housing discrimination because of an individual’s source of income, regardless of whether they would pay for housing through wages or a housing subsidy like a Housing Choice Voucher.

2017 OUTCOME – SB1331 was introduced by Senator Melinda Bush and assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee. No further action was taken on the bill.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION THAT WOULD BE ADVANCED –
Increase access to safe, decent, and affordable housing: Individuals receiving housing assistance, such as Section 8, should have equal opportunity to housing.
Looking Forward to 2018

As we watch the landscape change at the federal level and work to move forward from our own budget crisis, it is incumbent for Illinois leaders to take the reins, propose new ideas, and be willing to step out in support of proven solutions.

In 2008, the General Assembly recognized that it was possible to significantly reduce poverty and that the state government had a central role to play in making Illinois a stronger state. Since then, Illinois has weathered the Great Recession and an unprecedented budget crisis that has pulled the state backward. As we look to this milestone, we ask Illinois leaders to once again take ownership of their responsibility – and their power – to improve the lives of the Illinoisans living on the fewest resources and to invest in Illinois’s future.
Commission Membership

Co-chairs:
Janice Glenn, Illinois Department of Human Rights
Evelyn Diaz, Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights

Elected Officials:
Jacqueline Collins—State Senator
Mary Flowers—State Representative
Robyn Gabel—State Representative

Public Members:
Al Riddley
Michael B. Golden
Jim Hires — Eastern Illinois Food Bank
Andy Kulczycki — Community Service Center of Northern Champaign County
Gayle Nelson — Development Consultant and Leadership Coach
Wendy Pollack — Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
Maria Whelan — Illinois Action for Children
Victor Dickson — Safer Foundation
Ricardo Estrada — Metropolitan Family Services
Manuel Barbosa
Dalitso Sulamoyo – Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies
Tina Rounds – BEDS Plus Care, Inc.

Ex-Officio Members:
Nirav Shah—Illinois Department of Public Health
Michelle Gentry Wiseman – Illinois Department of Public Health
Marcus Hardy—Illinois Department of Corrections
Brian Colgan—Office of the Lieutenant Governor
Vinni Hall—Illinois State Board of Education
John Egan – Illinois Department of Child and Family Services
Katharine Gricevich – Illinois Student Assistance Commission
Eric Zarnikow—Illinois Student Assistance Commission
James Dimas—Illinois Department of Human Services
Michael Dropka – Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
Jean Bohnhoff – Illinois Department on Aging