

After 22 Years Of Service, Bunker Hill's Andy Manar To Resign From Illinois Senate

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BUNKER HILL – After eight successful years in the Illinois Senate representing the 48th District and more than 22 years in public office, State Senator Andy Manar (D-Bunker Hill) announced today that he will be resigning from the Illinois Senate on January 17, 2021.

Manar was first elected to the Bunker Hill City Council at the age of 21 in 1997. He was elected Mayor of Bunker Hill in 2001 and Chaired the Macoupin County Board until his election to the Illinois Senate in 2012.

During his tenure in the Senate, Manar passed numerous consequential laws that will have an impact on hardworking Illinois families for generations. Some highlights include Automatic Voter Registration, a statewide minimum wage for teachers, elimination of police ticket quotas, capping the out-of-pocket cost of insulin at \$100 per month, and the first-ever regulation of pharmacy benefit managers. Manar was a vocal supporter of labor unions, voting rights, access to affordable health care, teachers, and the LGBTQ community.

But, the most defining piece of legislation championed by Manar was school funding reform. For decades, Illinois was the worst-ranked state for its contribution to school funding—driving local property taxes higher every year and leaving students in low-income districts at a serious disadvantage. Over the course of four years, Manar held hundreds of town halls and public meetings across the state and overcame a veto by former Gov. Bruce Rauner to establish the Evidence-Based Funding for Student Success Act. For the first time in a generation, Illinois now puts the most underfunded schools and children living in poverty at the front of the funding line, making equity the foundation of public school funding, which now serves as a model for the country.

Amy Ballinger-Cole of Advance Illinois said of the 2017 overhaul, “He basically picked a fight that no one else wanted to touch. The fact that he got it done in this political environment is nothing short of a miracle.”

As Chair of Senate Appropriations II Committee, Manar delivered millions of dollars in infrastructure investment for parks, libraries, schools, and roads for the communities of the 48th District. Manar also directed state resources to new programs to help develop the area’s workforce, including millions of dollars in funding for the Work Skills Program at Richland Community College in Decatur, for the South Macoupin Consortium for Innovation and Career Pathways serving students in six high schools, to construct the new South Central Illinois Regional Workforce Training & Innovation Center in Litchfield, and for the Golden Apple Teacher Accelerators program at Blackburn College in Carlinville. Manar also created the first ever statewide Critical Access Pharmacy program to help keep small, independent pharmacists operating in underserved and rural communities.

Manar was the recipient of dozens of awards and recognitions during his tenure in the Illinois Senate, including the Dawn Clark Netsch "Straight Talk" Award from the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform, Common Cause Champion of Democracy, Rural Legislator of the Year from the Illinois Hospital Association, The President's Award from the Faith Coalition for the Common Good, Vince Demuzio Legislator of the Year from the Illinois Association of Community Action Agencies, 2019 Illinois Education Association Friend of Education, and 2016 Wall of Honor inductee at Bunker Hill High School.

Senator Manar has issued the following statement in relation to the announcement:

"Today, my heart is full with gratitude to the people of my hometown of Bunker Hill, Macoupin County, and the 48th Legislative District for giving me — the son of small town, blue-collar parents — the opportunity to serve half my life in public office and to leave my mark on the state that I love.

"On January 17, I will resign from the Illinois Senate. I will cherish the friendships I forged as we accomplished meaningful change together over the past eight years. I will always appreciate the truly unique diversity of the small towns and urban neighborhoods of the 48th District. While serving communities with people from all walks of life was often challenging, it brought me great joy to see firsthand what unites us and to then bring that perspective to Springfield to take on big issues. I'm proud to say we did that together and along the way improved life for everyone in this state.

"Trista and our children — now teens — have only known me as a husband and father who also carries the responsibility of serving as an elected official. They have never known a day otherwise. The time has come for someone new to take up the call in the Illinois Senate. Central Illinois is full of outstanding individuals ready to step forward to meet the challenge — be an agent of change in Downstate Illinois.

"After more than 22 years of public service, I realize this: I got more out of it than I gave it, and I gave it all I had each and every day. I remain forever grateful to my hometown of Bunker Hill, Macoupin County, and the people of the 48th District for giving me the opportunity time and again to serve."

A replacement to fill the vacancy in the 48th Legislative District will be chosen by the Democratic Party Chairs in Christian, Macon, Macoupin, Madison, Montgomery, and Sangamon Counties.

Manar and his family will remain in Bunker Hill, three blocks from his childhood home.