

Chris Welch Is Illinois' New House Speaker After Mike Madigan Didn't Receive Enough Votes

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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SPRINGFIELD - Illinois has a new 70th House speaker, Representative Emanuel "Chris" Welch (D-Hillside). Welch is the first black Illinois Speaker of the House.

Welch received 69 votes, 3 voted present. Illinois Representative Michael Madigan has been the house speaker since 1983 and was the longest-serving speaker in American history.

Madigan has been hurt politically with the ongoing federal investigation of the ComED influence-buying scandal in Springfield. Madigan has been implicated but not charged.

Welch was elected the new House speaker Wednesday morning before inauguration ceremonies for new 102nd State General Assembly.

The new House speaker made the following statement after the election: "I am honored to be called upon by my colleagues from the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus to put my name in for consideration. This historic moment in Illinois and across the country calls for new representation and unity of Democratic beliefs. I want to thank Speaker Madigan for his leadership. It has been a challenging year for all of us, but I am grateful for his commitment to serving the public."