



Op-Ed: Rep. Elik's April 2021 Legislative Update

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This is my third monthly update to the citizens of District 111, as your State Representative.

Just like February, March was packed full of Zooms, calls and meetings, but only one in-person session day in Springfield. Finally, starting on April 13th, we are now back to Springfield in-person every week until the last day of May.

Virtual committee hearings increased in number and time spent on each one as the month of March went on, as the committees had to meet the deadline to get bills moved to the House floor. Although we are back in Springfield each week now, the committee meetings are still virtual, so before and after the scheduled session times on the House floor, we do the virtual committee hearings from our offices.

Throughout April, we heard many subject matter hearings from the various state agencies and also heard the amendments to bills that had previously gone through the committee process.

April 23rd was the deadline to pass bills from the House so they could move to the Senate. This deadline made for a busy week as hundreds of bills were heard for a vote on the floor. We had long hours in committees and one evening stayed in session on the floor until midnight. When we stay in session that late, it isn't just the legislators working late. We have wonderful staff in Springfield that help keep track of every single action on every bill. They work very long hours and are always available for us legislators, to help us navigate the system. They are up early and stay late right along with us.

Several bills of importance passed the House last week. I am especially proud of being a Chief Co-sponsor of HB1975, which aims to prevent sexual abuse of students by teachers and staff in schools. HB1975 incorporates language that I had filed in a separate bill regarding in-person grooming of a child, and sets forth various definitions, professional standards and resources if a sexual abuse situation is suspected. The goal is to stop abuse before it starts, and passed the House unanimously. I also co-sponsored a bipartisan bill HB642 to enact leadership term limits of ten years, for the Speaker and other leaders of the House and Senate. This will ensure that another reign like former Speaker Michael Madigan had will not happen again. We await the Senate's action on all of the bills passed in the House.

It should also be noted that many bad bills were either not heard on the House floor at all or failed to get sixty votes, due to strong opposition by House Republicans, advocacy

groups and most importantly, by citizens making their views heard to their legislators. Please know that your efforts in contacting lawmakers on important issues is really important and continue to do so.

The legislative session will really heat up in the month of May, because bills only need a simple majority to pass before June 1st. Therefore, the last days of May are when controversial bills often get pushed through by the Majority party without Republican input or support. The budget will take center stage the last couple weeks of May, and we shall see if the closed-door negotiations of past years happen again this year. The other looming issue is the re-draw of the legislative maps that occurs every ten years after the census data is received. If the maps are not done by June 30th an independent commission will draw the maps.

In addition to the legislative work, I held two virtual town halls in March, and I look forward to doing more of these. The first one on March 9th was held jointly with Rep. CD Davidsmeyer, and we discussed various issues including the FOID and CCL card backlogs and pensions. The second one on March 24th was held jointly with Reps Charlie Meier and David Friess. This town hall discussed the House Republicans' plan to Reimagine Illinois. The four components of the plan include: ending the culture of corruption; instituting responsible fiscal leadership; growing jobs and opportunities; and ensuring public safety. Over eighty bills were filed by House Republicans that relate to these legislative goals. You will continue to hear more on the Reimagine Illinois platform, as we work on solutions to the deep-rooted issues that have harmed Illinois over the past decades.

Please reach out to my office if we can help you navigate state government or if you'd like to share your concerns on state legislation. I can be reached at: 618-433-8046 or email to: Elik@ILHouseGOP.org. My website is: RepElik.com.

State Representative Amy Elik, 111th District