



# **Op-Ed: Rep. Elik's June 2021 Legislative Update**

June 24 2021 5:02 PM



SPRINGFIELD - This is my fourth update to the citizens of the 111th district, as your State Representative. There is so much to cover, as the Spring legislative session came to a close on May 31st. I delayed writing this report as I wanted to discuss the comprehensive energy legislation that I expected to be voting on, but that legislation did not come to fruition. We closed out the session on May 31st without energy legislation, and then were called back to Springfield on June 16th, expecting to vote on an energy package, but again no progress was made. At this time, I am unclear when or if we will be called back to vote on energy issues such as the Clean Energy Jobs Act, the nuclear subsidies requested to keep two northern Illinois nuclear plants open, the solar cliff, and other related issues. Some of these matters are time-sensitive and need to be handled very soon.

In my last monthly update, I warned that the last days of May are traditionally when controversial bills are pushed through without support from Republicans, and unfortunately, this session was no different. Most notably, the fiscal year 2022 budget bill was filed on May 31st, had multiple amendments throughout the day, was called to be heard on the House floor at 11:35 pm, and then called for a vote at 11:55 pm. Republicans were allowed one speaker to ask questions and debate was wrapped up quickly. There is no way that members of either party can truly read and review a 3,000-plus page document in that short amount of time, and I voted no. This is a \$42.3 billion budget which includes an undeserved pay raise for legislators and unnecessarily doubles our office budgets. While some social service agencies may receive increases, some will not. The sham budget process was truly a disappointment and is an embarrassment for a CPA like me to witness. No business, no non-profit, and certainly no local government could nor should do a budget in this manner.

Another matter of great importance that was quickly voted on and signed into law by the Governor is the legislative maps. Every ten years the maps have to be redrawn based on information from the census. Although the census data is not yet available, the Democrat-controlled legislature pushed through their maps for the state legislature, the IL Supreme Court, and the Cook County board of review. These maps were apparently drawn using American Community Survey data, election data, and various other unknown sources. Once the maps were signed into law by Governor Pritzker, lawsuits were promptly filed challenging these maps, and therefore, more is expected to come on the outcome of these maps. An election-related bill passed that extends the 2022 primary date to June instead of March, therefore, there is time to get this all sorted out through the court process.

One of the bipartisan bills that passed the House and Senate and is awaiting the Governor's signature relates to the inflated trailer plate fees. SB58 finally reduces the trailer plate fees from \$118 down to \$36 (although not to the original price of \$18). I

believe that this is only fixed due to the outcry from people throughout the state who pushed back on this, loudly and often, and really made their voices heard, and I thank you for that.

One of the bills I am most proud of working on this session is HB1975, which is a comprehensive bill to prevent sexual abuse of students by school personnel. The bill passed the House unanimously, but unfortunately did not get called for a committee hearing in the Senate. It could still be voted on in the fall veto session and I am working with the bill advocates to bring attention to the bill and to contact Senators. The crime of sexual abuse of students still happens, and we will not stop fighting for our students.

I am pleased to report that the road naming resolutions for two roads in Godfrey passed both the House and Senate. Roads will be named for Captain Jake Ringering and Eldon “Twirp” Williams. Special thanks goes to Godfrey Mayor Mike McCormick for spearheading this effort. In addition, two good-government bills I chief-sponsored passed unanimously and will go to the Governor for signature. SB85 requires fire districts to use competitive bidding for leases over \$20,000, and SB2172 gives additional time to implement a required pharmacy tech training program throughout the state.

Looking ahead to the summer, I am back in the district and doing tours of local non-profits, businesses, farms, and governmental agencies. We continue to work with constituents on a wide variety of matters, including FOID and CCL card problems, unemployment issues, state agency issues, and much more. We are always happy to help in any way. Please don’t hesitate to call my office at 618-433-8046 if we can be of help.

State Representative Amy Elik, 111<sup>th</sup> District