



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

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This is my seventh update to the citizens of the 111th district, as your State Representative. I hope you had a happy Thanksgiving!

The last two weeks of October included legislative veto session days in Springfield. The veto session days are scheduled anticipating that the legislature may need to vote to override any bills that the Governor has vetoed. Any issues that did not get handled in the regular session can also be brought up during veto session.

I have discussed the state legislative maps in my previous columns, and these are still in litigation in federal court. The federal court directed the plaintiffs to propose fixes to the map that was voted into law in September, and the defendants have responded to their proposals. The court has set the week of December 6th as the timeframe for hearings on the briefings which both sides have filed. After that, the three-judge panel will make their decision and hopefully the maps will be finalized.

The Congressional map was finally presented to the public during veto session, and ultimately voted on and passed. This map establishes the 17 federal Congressional districts. Illinois previously had 18 Congressional districts but lost one because of the state's population losses.

Another matter of importance debated during veto session was the Healthcare Right of Conscience Act changes proposed by Democrats. I opposed any changes to this act, which has been in place since 1998. Senate Bill 1169 Amendment 3 puts into statute that it is not a violation of the Act to enforce the requirements for Covid vaccines. The Governor quickly signed the bill into law. Although the bill passed, it did not have enough votes to become effective immediately, therefore, it is not effective until June 1, 2022.

Veto session also included changes to the Parental Notification of Abortion act. I am sad to report that in Illinois, children can now have abortions without their parents being notified. The existing law did not require consent by a parent, only that the abortion clinic notify a parent that the procedure was about to occur. Illinois is now the most abortion-friendly state in the nation. I strongly opposed changes to the existing law.

I am pleased to report that HB1975 Faith's Law, which I cosponsored, passed both houses unanimously and awaits the Governor's signature. This bill requires several initiatives aimed at addressing sexual abuse and assault in schools by school personnel. There is much more work to be done on this topic though. Sadly, the Office of Inspector General of the Chicago Public Schools released a report this month regarding their investigation of a Chicago school where thirteen staff and volunteers were removed from their jobs. The investigation alleged that several adults were involved in grooming and sexual misconduct with students, and the others allegedly tolerated and covered up

the abuse. I am hopeful that HB1975, as well as the next steps in our legislative work, will stop these types of cases from happening ever again.

In November I concluded the 2021 mobile office hours throughout multiple communities in District 111. I appreciate everyone taking the time to come and talk with me. We will resume these again in 2022 after the Spring legislative session is complete. I have also continued visits and tours of local businesses and non-profits. I am busy planning for the Spring legislative session which kicks off on January 4th. Due to 2022 being an election year, and the primary being pushed back to June 2022, the Spring session runs from January 4th through April 8th.

In celebration of the holiday season, I am hosting an Open House and non-perishable food drive at my district office in Alton. The Open House is Wednesday, December 8 from 5 pm-7 pm at my office at 192C Alton Square Mall Drive, which is behind Captain D's and Office Depot. Please bring any non-perishable foods either to the Open House or anytime from December 6-10 from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. All items collected will be given to the Crisis Food Center in Alton.

From my family to yours, I wish you all a very blessed and joyful Christmas season and a Happy New Year!

State Representative Amy Elik, 111th District