



Rep. Elik Provides 2022 Legislative Session Update

April 13 2022 10:25 AM



SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois House of Representatives adjourned shortly after 6:00 am on Saturday, April 9 following the passage of a state budget and a temporary tax relief package scheduled to take effect July 1. According to State Representative Amy Elik, “There were several good bills approved this session year. However, I’m disappointed the legislature adjourned ahead of the May 31st deadline without a solution to get tough on crime, zero anti-corruption reforms considered, and no solution to pay off \$1.8 billion in debt accumulated during the pandemic despite a federal bailout.”

On a positive note, the legislature did approve legislation sponsored by Rep. Elik to support the safety of transportation for foster children, allow family and friends to visit their loved ones in nursing homes, alleviate the teacher shortage in our state, and renew scholarships for low-income students.

State Budget

The General Assembly approved (HB 900) a 46.5 billion dollar state budget for Fiscal Year 23 which runs from July 1, 2022 through July 1, 2023. “The state budget approved spends 10% more than last year and even includes a pay raise for state lawmakers. The budget is only balanced this year thanks to a federal bailout, setting up Illinois’ potential budget for failure next year if not managed properly. I voted no.”

Tax Relief

“I voted for the tax relief package because I know individuals and families in my district are struggling to make ends meet,” said Rep. Elik. “The people of Illinois need tax relief, they need a tax break on their gasoline, groceries, income, and property. However, the tax relief offered this year is nothing more than an election-year gimmick. If the Democrats want to provide tax relief to the people of Illinois, then we should adopt a balanced budget that includes permanent tax relief – not election-year gimmicks and no pay raises for lawmakers.”

The temporary tax relief that will take effect July 1 was legislation (SB 157) to suspend the scheduled two cents per gallon gasoline tax increase, 1% sales tax reduction for food, a \$50 check per taxpayer, \$100 check per child, \$300 property tax rebate, and tax relief for the hospitality industry.

Improving Safety of Transportation for Foster Children

Rep. Amy Elik sponsored legislation (HB 5064) on behalf of a local foster parent following concerns shared with her about the safety of children under the care of DCFS.

According to State Representative Amy Elik, “When it was brought to my attention that transportation providers for children under state care were not picking kids up on time or not picking up children at all on a Friday night – I knew something had to change. My legislation that will head to the governor’s desk will ensure common-sense safety measures are required for all drivers providing transportation to children under state care and that no child will be forgotten.”

HB 5064 sponsored by Rep. Elik which passed the House and Senate on March 31, provides that transportation services to children and families must comply with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. Drivers must submit to a fingerprint-based criminal background check. New changes also include proper training for drivers on the installation and operation of a child car seat, possession of a valid driver’s license and an adequate driving record, proof of insurance, and proper vehicle maintenance. Furthermore, the transportation agency must provide specified information for the purposes of communication during the scheduled transport to make sure a child always has a ride home.

Allowing Visitors at Healthcare Facilities

Since the start of the pandemic, individuals living in nursing homes and other healthcare facilities were often denied the right to have their family or friends visit them. As my colleagues Rep. Charlie Meier and Rep. Chris Bos stated during the debate on this important bill, “this bill ensures that nobody will die alone.”

“I agree with my colleagues which is why I co-sponsored this bill (SB 1405) to make sure that our seniors and individuals living in healthcare facilities get to spend their final days with their friends and loved ones,” said Rep. Elik.

SB 1405 approved by the legislature on April 6 will allow for at least one visitor, not including a member of the clergy, to be permitted to visit a loved one. Healthcare facilities are empowered to set safety guidelines and ensure that neither the patient nor visitor are endangered by the visit, but no longer could they be outright denied due to an executive order.

Teacher Shortage

With 93 percent of Illinois school districts anticipating the teacher shortage will worsen over the 2023 and 2024 academic years, Rep. Elik co-sponsored SB 3893 to allow a substitute teacher to teach up to 120 school days beginning with the 2021-2022 school year through the 2023 school year. Currently, no substitute teacher may teach for longer than 90 school days for any one licensed teacher under contract in the same school year.

Senate Bill 3893 approved by the legislature on April 5th should help alleviate the teacher shortage by allowing substitute teachers to teach more days in the classroom.

Scholarships for Students

With over 28,000 scholarships awarded since its inception in 2018, on April 7, the legislature approved the extension of the Invest In Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program under HB 4126 co-sponsored by Rep. Elik.

“I am glad this legislation was approved to make sure students across Illinois will have access to the education that fits them best. I hope this privately funded program will continue to be a success for years to come,” said Rep. Elik.

This Invest In Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program offers a 75 percent income tax credit to individuals and businesses that contribute to qualified Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs). The SGOs then provide scholarships for students whose families meet the income requirements to attend qualified, non-public schools and technical academies in Illinois.

Have an issue or question concerning state government, you may contact State Representative Amy Elik's office at 618-433-8046 or visit RepElik.com.