

Governor Pritzker Signs SAFE-T Act Amendment

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December 6 2022 5:19 PM



CHICAGO – Governor Pritzker today signed HB1095, a series of amendments and clarifications to the landmark SAFE-T Act, originally passed in 2021. The bill addresses misinformation related to the Act, including clarifying the detention net, expanding processes for transitioning to cashless bail on January 1st, and specifying definitions of willful flight and dangerousness, among other changes.

“I’m pleased that the General Assembly has passed clarifications that uphold the principle we fought to protect: to bring an end to a system where wealthy violent offenders can buy their way out of jail, while less fortunate nonviolent offenders wait in jail for trial,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Advocates and lawmakers came together and put in hours of work to strengthen and clarify this law, uphold our commitment to equity, and keep people safe.”

The bill clarifies multiple aspects of the SAFE-T Act, which ends the cash bail system in Illinois effective January 1st, 2023 and creates a more equitable system where pre-trial detention is based on community risk rather than financial means. The clarifications to the SAFE-T Act are the result of the work of a bi-cameral legislative group who collaborated with advocates, public defenders, state’s attorneys, victim advocates, and law enforcement officials.

Changes to the Act clarify court authority in controlling electronic monitoring and escape, outline specific guidelines for trespassing violations, and create a grant program to aid public defenders with increased caseloads. The amendments strengthen and clarify the main principle of the SAFE-T Act- to ensure that individuals who pose a risk to the community aren’t released from jail just because they are able to pay bail while people without financial means sit in jail regardless of whether they pose a risk at all.

“The SAFE-T Act, including these important clarifications, will help right the wrongs of policies that have disproportionately harmed low-income, marginalized communities while helping to keep Illinoisans safe,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. “I commend members of the General Assembly for coming together to make these changes and provide us a clear path to ensure both accountability and justice. We must stop criminalizing poverty, and that is our goal as we end cash bail in Illinois and uphold human rights for all in our legal system.”

“We understand that public safety is not a static issue,” said Deputy Majority Leader Jehan Gordon-Booth (D-Peoria). “This legislation strengthens the underlying SAFE-T Act with valuable feedback from survivors, law enforcement, prosecutors and other public safety advocates. If we want to make our communities safer, we have to work together. This update is a step in the right direction.”

“It’s vital the pretrial system in Illinois remains equitable and that all individuals are treated fairly, regardless of financial status,” said State Senator Scott Bennett (D-Champaign). “After collaboration between a diverse group, we were able to create a measure that ensures public safety and maintains the intent of the Pretrial Fairness Act. I am proud of everyone’s collaborative effort and their commitment to make Illinois safe.”

“The SAFE-T Act was the result of hours of testimony and negotiations with domestic violence advocates, proponents of reform, law enforcement and states attorneys at the table working to create a pathway to a better and more equitable criminal legal system,” said State Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr. (D-Chicago). “However, due to the misinformation campaign led by opponents of the measure, we spent countless hours dispelling falsehoods and working to ensure that the law was not taken out of context. I thank the governor and my colleagues in both chambers for prioritizing a measure that clarifies the language of this transformational law while preserving the protections for crime survivors and ensures we stop criminalizing poverty in this state.”

“To say that I’m proud of all the work and advocacy that went into the passage of this act would be an understatement,” said State Senator Robert Peters (D-Chicago). “My colleagues and I, with input from the Coalition to End Money Bond, the States Attorneys Association, the Sheriff’s Association and survivor advocates, were able to create something that will change lives and reform the criminal justice system for the better. This is our generation carrying the torch for civil and human rights, and Illinois will only become safer and more equitable because of it.”

“This legislation builds on the foundation we set in the SAFE-T Act by making certain that provisions are clearer, more effective, and less difficult to implement,” Representative Eva-Dina Delgado (D-Chicago) said. “Institutional barriers within the criminal justice system have disproportionately affect people in the communities that I represent and this legislation addresses that disparity. I am so proud of the work that my colleagues, stakeholders and I did to engage and collaborate to bring forth this bill.”

“This measure is part of a continued effort to address misconceptions and sincere concerns brought forward by law enforcement, survivors and advocates,” said Rep. Dave Vella (D-Rockford). “It’s a reminder of the need to work together, and of our shared mission to make every community safer for families across our state.”

"This is the result of hundreds of hours and a collaboration of all stakeholders to clarify and strengthen the language from the previous legislation. It's been an honor to serve my constituents as part of the Public Safety Working Group and create common sense policy solutions that will improve the safety of our communities and the integrity of our justice system," said Assistant Majority Leader Natalie Manley (D-Joliet). "This is a tremendous step toward a safer, fairer Illinois for all."

“By strengthening the SAFE-T Act, we are continuing the vital work of keeping Illinoisans safe,” said Rep. Kam Buckner (D-Chicago). “Maintaining a robust justice system will always be an ongoing task, one that we prioritize. Hundreds of hours of consultation with stakeholders from across the ideological spectrum went into producing

this bill, which maintains the historic reforms of the SAFE-T Act while ensuring a successful implementation of new policy.”

“The SAFE-T Act was carefully crafted to promote a more equitable criminal justice system while simultaneously keeping our communities safe across Illinois. This legislation takes steps to ensure the SAFE-T reforms are carried out successfully,” said Rep. Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz (D-Glenview). “Our goal was to reinforce the principles we were proud to pass with the SAFE-T Act, which replaces a wealth-based pretrial detention system with one based on a person's threat to the community. This legislation protects those goals.”

"When we passed the original SAFE-T Act, we did so with the understanding that more work would need to be done to implement these historic reforms. This legislation keeps that promise," said Rep. Justin Slaughter (D-Chicago). "This legislation clarifies and strengthens the law, reflecting the input and agreement of law enforcement, survivor advocates, and reformers. The work of building a fairer justice system continues, and I am grateful for the partnership of my colleagues in the House Public Safety Working Group, our Senate colleagues, and Governor Pritzker.”