

New Year, New Laws: Giannoulas Initiated Laws Take Effect

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SPRINGFIELD - Several new laws initiated by Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulas take effect today. The initiatives were passed in 2023 by the Illinois General Assembly before being signed into law.

“I wish all Illinoisans a safe, healthy and happy New Year. The laws going into effect today will make our roads safer, increase voter access and protect our libraries and librarians,” Giannoulas said. “But this is just the beginning. My office has big plans for 2024 as we continue to strive to deliver the best possible results for all Illinoisans.”

In an effort to combat distracted driving, House Bill 2431 makes it illegal to Zoom, watch or stream videos, or access social media sites while driving. This legislation will ensure drivers keep their eyes and attention on the road, making Illinois roadways safer for all Illinois motorists.

It is now easier for young Illinoisans to guarantee that they are eligible to vote when they turn 18. Under Senate Bill 2123, teens obtaining their driver's license or state ID card may register to vote at an Illinois Driver and Motor Vehicle (DMV) facility. This legislation increases voter participation and access, ensuring that young people have a voice on the issues that have a direct and tangible impact on their lives, especially student loan debt, the economy and education.

In order to qualify for grant funding in 2024, Illinois libraries are now required to adhere to the American Library Association's (ALA) Library Bill of Rights or issue a statement prohibiting the practice of banning books or resources. This first-in-the-nation legislation guards against censorship, protects librarians and preserves the purpose of education: teaching children to think for themselves.

Individuals seeking abortion care and undocumented immigrants will feel more at-ease while traveling on Illinois roads knowing that the use of automatic license plate readers (ALPRs) is now regulated in the state. House Bill 3326 prohibits the use of data collected with ALPRs to track innocent people or criminalize lawful behavior. While ALPRs can be a valuable tool for law enforcement, this regulation will prevent abuse, harassment and unlawful surveillance.

Illinois drivers can now feel free to hang an air freshener, COVID-19 mask or rosary from their vehicle's rearview mirror without the worry of getting pulled over. House Bill 2389 makes it illegal for police to stop motorists for the presence of hanging items, decreasing unnecessary encounters over minor infractions, which can lead to discriminatory practices and violent confrontations between police and motorists.

Libraries, the cornerstones of Illinois communities, will now have an easier time making digital resources available to residents across the state, regardless of where they live. Senate Bill 2419 authorizes the Secretary of State's office to negotiate with e-book and audiobook publishers to acquire digital rights to these materials at lower prices.