

2021 »

ILLINOIS COUNTY ACTION PROGRAM

(ICAP)



Counties COUNT!

January 1, 2021

www.isacoil.org
217-679-3368

About ISACo

The Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) is a statewide association whose mission is to empower county officials to provide excellent service to their residents. ISACo member counties are comprised of forward-thinking public servants who recognize that the challenges confronting county governments require new and innovative ideas, collaborative solutions and collective advocacy at the state and federal levels of government.

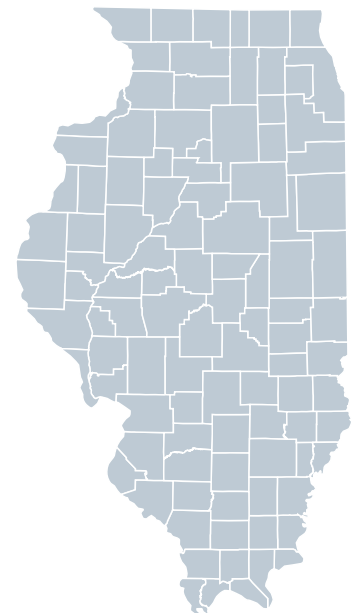
ISACo provides education and training opportunities, peer-to-peer networking, shared resources and robust representation before policymakers at various levels of government. ISACo creates and connects county officials to these opportunities and successfully equips them to make counties ideal places to live, work and play.

ISACo is organized exclusively for nonprofit purposes and will operate at all times in the manner contemplated by section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code or by such other provisions of the Code that will assist ISACo to accomplish its non-profit purposes. ISACo is committed to the highest standard of ethical conduct and transparency in the pursuit of our mission.



Core Tenents

- ▶ Preserve and Expand Local Control
- ▶ Protect County Revenue Sources
- ▶ Oppose Unfunded Mandates
- ▶ Promote Ethical and Responsive Governance



Counties COUNT!

The following legislative proposals have been approved for introduction and pursuit in 2021 by the Illinois State Association of Counties (ISACo) Board of Directors. The document will be updated to reflect bill numbers and sponsors when the information becomes available.

EXPAND LOCAL OPTION MOTOR FUEL TAX (MFT) TO ALL NON-HOME RULE COUNTIES

PROBLEM

The only non-home rule counties permitted to impose a county MFT are DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry and Will. These counties are permitted to impose an MFT not to exceed 8 cents per gallon following passage of an ordinance or resolution by the county board. Cook County imposes an MFT using its home rule authority.

PROPOSAL

Expand authority to impose a county MFT not to exceed 8 cents per gallon to all non-home rule county boards for the ongoing maintenance and construction of essential infrastructure.

AUTHORIZE ALL NON-HOME RULE COUNTIES TO REGULATE SPECIFIC ADULT USE FACILITIES

PROBLEM

In 2019, legislation was enacted to provide DuPage County with regulatory authority over adult entertainment facilities in unincorporated areas of the county when the facilities involve exposure of specified anatomical areas or performance of specified sexual services or activities (P.A. 101-0405).

PROPOSAL

Expand the regulatory authority provided in the law to all non-home counties.

CLEAN-UP STATUTE CONCERNING DUPLICATE TOWNSHIP NAMES

PROBLEM

The Illinois Secretary of State is responsible for identifying instances where two or more townships in the state share a name. In such instances, it becomes the responsibility of the county (or counties) with the township(s) that did not adopt the name first to adopt a different name for the township(s). The Secretary of State does not actively enforce this statute and duplicate township names would most likely only be an issue if similarly named townships are located within the same county.

PROPOSAL

Amend the statute to require that a county change a duplicate township name only if the duplicate names exist within a single county.

ALLOW COUNTY BOARDS TO BE "CO-EMPLOYERS" IN LABOR NEGOTIATIONS

PROBLEM

A county board does not have authority to participate in labor negotiations involving the offices of the county clerk, circuit clerk or chief judge and their respective bargaining units. The board or its designee is even restricted from observing the negotiations unless the negotiating parties agree to allow for observation. A county board is ultimately responsible for funding what is negotiated and therefore has a financial interest in the outcome.

PROPOSAL

Amend the law to consider the county board as a "co-employer" when the offices of the county clerk, circuit clerk and chief judge are involved in labor negotiations with their respective bargaining units. This will allow the county board, as the appropriating body, to participate in the negotiations.

ELIMINATE EXCESSIVE TOWNSHIP INFLUENCE OVER COUNTY ZONING DECISIONS

PROBLEM

Current law allows townships that have a planning commission within a county of less than 600,000 residents to object to a proposed county zoning ordinance affecting the unincorporated area of the township. If the township submits a written objection to the county board within 30 days following submission of the proposed zoning ordinance or resolution by the County Zoning Commission to the county board, then the county board is prohibited from adopting the zoning provisions without a three-fourths vote of the board.

PROPOSAL

Remove the provision that allows an objection by a township to increase the vote threshold necessary for a county board to approve a zoning ordinance or resolution in a county with fewer than 600,000 residents.

ELECTION OF COUNTY BOARD CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON

PROBLEM

In counties where the position of chairperson and vice chairperson are elected by county board members and not voters, each position is elected by a majority or plurality of those present at the time of the vote. If there is a vacancy in the office of county board chairperson, the vice-chairperson is permitted to serve as chairperson for the duration of the departed chairperson's two-year term.

PROPOSAL

Require the chairperson and vice-chairperson to be elected by a majority of those elected to the board instead of among those present at the meeting during which the election is held. Permit the vice-chairperson to fill a vacancy left by a departed chairperson only until a new chairperson is elected and not automatically for the remainder of a two-year term.

PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT INCENTIVE

PROBLEM

Local governments under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) have a disincentive to abate a portion of their property taxes out of concern they will lose the ability to include the amount abated within the following year's aggregate extension base. The law essentially incents taxing districts to levy the maximum amount permissible under PTELL or lose the additional property tax dollars in perpetuity.

PROPOSAL

Authorize taxing districts to order the county clerk to abate any portion of what is found to be surplus revenue while allowing for the amount of the abated revenues to be included in the following year's aggregate extension base.

COLLECTING UNPAID TAXES RESULTING FROM ERRONEOUS HOMESTEAD EXEMPTIONS

PROBLEM

The Illinois Revenue Code creates homestead exemptions and establishes a mechanism for erroneously granted homestead exemptions to be recouped by counties for distribution to the various taxing bodies within the counties. Cook County has a stronger enforcement mechanism than the other 101 counties as a result of being able to look at prior years' property tax payments to determine if an erroneous homestead exemption led to underpayments. These unpaid taxes are collected and interest payments are permissible.

PROPOSAL

Authorize all counties to review the past 3 years of property taxes paid by a taxpayer when the taxpayer is found to have improperly claimed a homestead exemption. Unpaid taxes would be collected and the county may impose interest on the amount of the unpaid taxes.

ALLOW WEBSITE POSTING OF PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

PROBLEM

In general assessment years, counties must post a list of all property assessments in a newspaper of general circulation within the county. In the years between general assessments, counties are mandated to publish in a newspaper a list of only those real property assessments that have been changed. These publication requirements are expensive.

PROPOSAL

Allow county governments to meet the property assessment publication mandate by either publishing the information on a county website or in a newspaper of general circulation in the county. Allowing counties to fulfill the publication mandate on their websites would save taxpayers thousands of dollars annually and the information would be more accessible to the public.

ELECTION MODERNIZATION

PROBLEM

The manner in which elections are conducted is changing as increasing numbers of voters take advantage of opportunities to vote early or by mail. Despite these changing preferences among voters, counties are stuck in the past and are required to operate and fund, at the same historic levels, a statutorily defined number of polling places on Election Day. This outdated approach diverts scarce resources away from rising vote by mail costs.

PROPOSAL

Local election jurisdictions should be granted the flexibility to operate regional voting centers and to more efficiently manage the election process based on the evolving needs of their voters.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

PROBLEM

The COVID-19 pandemic is straining county budgets as a consequence of the additional services and activities required to address the needs of county residents. The requirement for additional financial resources to contend with the pandemic has compelled county public health departments to shift existing resources toward pandemic-related expenses. Federal and state funding has not bridged these local budget gaps.

PROPOSAL

The State should appropriate additional funding to public health departments based upon their critical role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and other public health issues in local communities.

DUTIES OF COUNTY AUDITORS

PROBLEM

Illinois state statute prescribes several duties for the county auditor. The law imposes additional duties on auditors in counties of 275,000 or fewer residents. These duties involve accounting functions that go beyond auditing functions.

PROPOSAL

Allow county boards in counties with 200,000 or fewer residents to decide whether or not the county auditor should perform accounting duties described in state statute as "additional duties."

ADDITIONAL TIME TO REDRAW COUNTY BOARD DISTRICTS

PROBLEM

Counties are required by law to redraw county board districts every 10 years. To accomplish this, counties are dependent on timely data from the U.S. Census Bureau. The COVID-19 pandemic has created delays in the availability of this essential data for the 2020 Census.

PROPOSAL

Amend the law to sensibly extend the deadline by which county boards must redraw districts for the 2020 census in accordance with the revised census timelines.

RECOVER COSTS FOR MODIFYING HIGHWAY PROJECT TO ACCOMMODATE FAILURE OF UTILITY TO RELOCATE FACILITIES

PROBLEM

Illinois law does not presently allow for cost recovery associated with expenses resulting from the State or a county highway authority needing to revise their project plan to meet a deadline as a result of a utility's failure to relocate their facilities in a timely manner.

PROPOSAL

Amend the law to allow the state and county highway authorities to recover costs associated with expenses resulting from the State or county highway authority needing to revise a project plan to meet a deadline as a result of a utility's failure to relocate their facilities in a timely manner.

ISACo Board Of Directors

OFFICERS

President

Deborah Sims
Cook County Board of Commissioners

Vice President

Vacant

Secretary

David Meyer
Washington County Board Chairman

Treasurer

William Crowley
Winnebago County Auditor

Alma Anaya
Cook County Board of
Commissioners

Stanley Moore
Cook County Board of
Commissioners

Sandy Hart
Lake County Board Chairwoman

Peter Silvestri
Cook County Board of
Commissioners

Denise Winfrey
Will County Board

David Zimmerman
Tazewell County Board Chairman

Dan Cronin
DuPage County Board Chairman

John Finrock
Ogle County Board Chairman



CONTACT US

Contact

Joe McCoy
Executive Director

Address

Illinois State Association of Counties
427 E. Monroe Street,
Springfield, IL 62701

Phone

Phone: (217) 679-3368

Online

Email: jmccoy@isacoil.org
Website: isacoil.org



@isacoil
@IsacoTweets