

HCAA Legislative Report

January 9, 2023

Respectfully submitted by Jim Edstrom and Linda Kolbusz

November 17, 2022

The Illinois Policy Institute is actively recruiting citizens to run for positions on local school boards around the state for the upcoming local elections scheduled for April 4, 2023. They are emphasizing property taxes (which they claim are too high), “keeping kids in school” in the wake of “teacher strikes and school closures,” and “keeping parents in the know.” These initiatives serve as a reminder of the importance of closely monitoring local elections.

November 18, 2022

In the November election, Illinois voters approved amendment 1 guaranteeing “the right of employees to bargain over ‘wages, hours, and working conditions, and to protect their economic welfare and safety at work’ and prohibiting “the passage of any state or local law ‘that interferes with, that negates, or diminishes’ that right, including so-called right-to-work laws, which would prohibit contracts between employers and unions that require union membership as a condition of employment.” Dan Petrella of the *Chicago Tribune* observed: “The real-world effects of the change will be determined at bargaining tables and in courtrooms in the years ahead. . . . Among issues for potential legal disputes are who counts as an “employee” covered by the amendment, how the language comports with existing state and federal law, and what falls within the bounds of “economic welfare” and “safety at work.”

November 30, 2022

[The Illinois House passed HB 1293](#) urging the state’s five retirement systems to divest their holdings in companies headquartered in Belarus and Russia in retaliation for their participation in the war in Ukraine.”

December 4, 2022

[An article by Matthew Debicki in Community College Daily](#) highlighted a report from the American Association of Community Colleges underscoring the economic value of community colleges. “[O]ne of every 18 jobs in the U.S. is supported by the activities of former community college students. And for every dollar of public money invested in community colleges, taxpayers receive a cumulative value of \$6.80 over the course of students’ working lives. That’s a 12.2% rate of return to taxpayers, which means community colleges generate more in tax revenue than they take, resulting in a “surplus that government can use to fund other programs.”

December 14, 2022

A bill has been introduced in Congress to increase salaries for K-12 teachers nationwide. “The American Teacher Act would incentivize states to raise their minimum teacher salaries to \$60,000 for public K-12 schools through a grant program at the Department of Education. The legislation would also mandate yearly increases congruent to inflation to support states’ ongoing efforts to ensure competitive wages.”

January 6, 2023

The election of Kevin McCarthy (R-California) as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives required 15 ballots—the most for any Speaker election since before the Civil War. There are concerns about the concessions that McCarthy made to members of the Republican caucus, including a projected effort to target Social Security and Medicare in return for raising the federal debt limit.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Edstrom and Linda Kolbusz