**Spring 2025: End of Session Report**

**Mac Strategies Group Government Affairs**

**Overview**

Every spring legislative session tends to be its own beast – with its own pace, high notes, and win-loss records. However, the 2025 spring legislative session set new precedents for being unique in many ways.

It may have been the first full spring session with neither the lingering effects of COVID limitations on legislating nor the cushion of federal funding that have helped prop up special programs and budgets (like transit systems in the Chicagoland area). With the Trump administration actively withholding $1.8 billion from Illinois and talk of Medicaid changes that could lead to a loss of $3.2 billion for the state, the specter of funding insecurity loomed since the start of 2025.

The pace of legislative review and advancement in this spring session was akin to an election year, despite it not being one. In contrast, the last handful of session days felt as though several months were packed into such a short span; it may have been that imbalanced tempo that contributed to so many initiatives failing to cross the finish line.

While the Legislature did pass a budget the majority deems balanced and the Governor is likely to sign, all leaders have acknowledged the likelihood of returning to Springfield to rectify budget holes that could be blown by federal changes or to take another stab at some of the higher priority items yet to be resolved. Key among these are transit, energy and pensions.

Lots more to come, for sure!

**Schedule**

As you recall, the 104th General Assembly kicked off with Inauguration ceremonies on Wednesday, January 8, 2025. By the deadline to file new bills of Friday, February 11, lawmakers had filed nearly 6,400 new proposals, resolutions, and placeholder ‘shell’ bills for consideration this spring. Prior to this session’s start, the Legislature convened for a brief ‘lame duck’ session.

To recap, here are the deadlines and milestones, laid out in each chamber’s schedule ([House](https://www.ilga.gov/house/schedules/2025_Spring_Session_Calendar.pdf), [Senate](https://www.ilga.gov/senate/schedules/2025_Senate_Spring_Session.pdf)):

* Thursday, January 2-Tuesday, January 7: Lame duck session
* Wednesday, January 8: Inauguration ceremonies
* Friday, January 24: Bill drafting requests must be in to the Legislative Reference Bureau
* Friday, February 7: Bills must be filed / introduced
* *Week of February 10: Both chambers in district; no session week*
* *Wednesday, February 19: Governor’s budget address*
* Friday, March 21: Deadline for bills to pass out of their first chamber’s committee
* Friday, April 11: Deadline for bills to pass out of their first chamber
* *Week of April 13: Both chambers in district; no session week*
* Friday, May 9: Deadline for bills to pass out of their second chamber’s committee

Extended deadline for 122 Senate bills to pass the Senate floor

* Friday, May 23: Deadline for bills to pass out of their second chamber
* *Saturday, May 31: Session adjournment*

**Election Impact**

Governor Pritzker has stated he will make his public decision whether to run for a third term in July. His national ambitions are well known, with news reports he was vetted for Vice President in the last election, and his fortune and his willingness to publicly criticize President Trump giving him national reach and coverage.

U.S. Senator Dick Durbin and Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky (9) have each announced their plans to retire, opening up key seats in the state. We have begun to see the signs of a domino effect, with other office holders (including two sitting Congress members) announcing intentions to run for their seats, and others starting campaigns for the lower office they’ll vacate. With a Chicago Mayoral election in spring of 2027, the next two years could bring a remarkable pattern of state, federal and statewide officials ‘moving up or moving out.’ The result could be a high proportion of new faces in the Legislature to track and work with on all our many issues.

**Scorecard**

Late in 2024, budget forecasters warned of a $3.2 billion shortfall anticipated for Fiscal Year 2026, meaning that significant cuts in spending and additional revenue would be needed without any further changes or additions.

When Governor Pritzker proposed his budget in February, he outlined a plan to address this, but he opted not to address the transit issue, putting the ball in the Legislature’s court to add revenues to cover the fiscal cliff and expansion requests from many corners of the northeastern Illinois region. He took this same tack with other upcoming costly budget requests, sitting out the hardest part of the conversation, as subsequent budget forecasts pegged the state’s draw lower than anticipated. As session developed, he made statements of opposition to revenue-generating ideas that would hit working families or raise taxes across the board. It’s hard not to see an association between this position and his electoral interests. Regardless, those choices arguably steered a significant portion of the Legislature’s outcomes, narrowing the tax-generation ideas that could gain acceptance across both branches of government, without helping overcome the hurdles needed to resolve issues like transit this session.

**State Budget**

The General Assembly passed a budget hitting $55.2 billion. Some key components of revenues raised include:

* A tax amnesty for both residential and commercial payers, expected to bring in $198-228 million
* 45% tax on cigars, e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches and chewing tobacco
* Delaying the year’s last transfer of revenue from the motor fuel tax to the Road Fund for the second year – $171 million
* Sweeping money from funds that are over-producing or under-utilized – $237 million
* Changes to the way the state collects taxes for business transaction across state lines, including changing the ‘throwback rule’ and a threshold for business sales requiring tax payments – $72 million
* Utilizing $45 million from the state’s Budget Stabilization Fund
* A digital wager tax (on sports betting) – $36 million
* Requiring all short-term rental platforms (not just Airbnb) to pay the hotel tax – $15 million

A notable cut that was made to save revenue was ending the ‘Health Benefits for Immigrant Adults’ program (HBIA), which provided Medicaid coverage for authorized immigrants aged 45-64 years old, at an estimated savings of $400 million. The HBIS program benefiting senior citizen immigrants aged 65+ was continued, at $110 million. These programs are not for new-arriving refugees or immigrants seeking asylum.

**Transit**

As mentioned, a significant shortfall in funding was anticipated for the transit systems serving the greater Chicagoland region, including the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), PACE, and Metra with their umbrella group Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). First announced at a lower dollar figure, the cost was discussed at $770 million (increased due to inflation) during the session’s budget season, with a schedule of the year-over-year increases. This is not a one-time need, and in a few years, the figure will grow to over $1 billion for operating costs, not including service extensions which so many desire. The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) released a report detailing options for funding, putting the figure inclusive of desired service expansions at over $1.5 billion for FY 2026.

In the fall of 2024, the House Democrats convened a working group in private educational sessions and the Senate hosted a series of public hearings across the state to hear from stakeholders and the transit agency representatives directly. Yet, it wasn’t until late in session that plans for governance reforms and specific funding options were made public. Relying on a tax on digital advertising, fees of $1.50 per delivery of purchases (originally including prescriptions and food), and a charge for Transportation Network Companies (TNC) like Uber and Lyft left the effort vulnerable to the significant pushback that these proposals quickly yielded from their respective industries. Ultimately, the Senate voted to pass their plan for both reform and revenue, but at a point in session when it was clear the House did not have the same will to accept the plan. House leaders publicly stated a belief that the systems do not need new revenues until calendar year 2026, giving more time to work on a solution. The transit systems have stated they will need to begin laying off workers and scaling back service routes this fall to account for the lower funds.

Whether it was the late-arriving plans, the chambers being on different pages, the quickly-mobilized opposition to specific revenue ideas, the hands-off approach of the Governor, or the magnitude of the dollar figure in a year already laden with budget obstacles, it’s clear there’s more work to do to address these transit needs.

**Energy**

There are similar themes in the debate over energy legislation this spring that also, ultimately, failed to land. Interest in energy legislation has been brewing for a while, with topics like energy efficiency being floated. Legislation that passed during lame duck session on battery storage was designed for the Legislature to have to pass a follow-up measure. Rising energy demand and the changing energy mix leading up to CEJA implementation dates within the regional transmission organizations covering Illinois have brought the draw of data centers to the forefront, with proposals by environmentalists to impose limits. Recent attempts to silo energy legislation were not enough to resist the urge to ‘christmas tree’ varied energy proposals together into one behemoth bill, with added ‘ornaments’ of smaller emerging ideas by those drawn to imposing new regulations. As has been the fate of these omnibus bills in the past, it proved too unwieldy to pass this session, even after having been scaled back to the core topics named above. Full language of proposals were only made public very late in session, and lawmakers were reported to be surprised by the intensity and scope of opposition and feedback. Much of this topic is viewed as a ‘not yet’ rather than a ‘no,’ so we’ll expect to see more follow-up in subsequent sessions.

**Next Up**

Lawmakers will have dueling political and policy priorities in the month of October. Petition gathering in August will kick off election season, with collection starting August 5 and filing ending November 5. Veto session has been announced for October 14-16 and 28-30 ([House](https://www.ilga.gov/house/schedules/2025_Legislative_Calendar_Veto_Session.pdf), [Senate](https://www.ilga.gov/senate/schedules/2025_104th_GA_Veto_Calendar.pdf)).

Now that spring session (or, the month of May) has ended, a higher vote threshold is required for votes on bills (with an immediate effective date). As a result, there may be limits to what the Legislature can – or will want to – accomplish before 2026.

**Chicagoland Apartment Association**

The legislature’s spring 2025 session was a resounding success for CAA. Although rent control measures of a variety of types were filed in both chambers, including by the Chair of the House Housing Committee, no such measure advanced. Also, Rep. Rashid’s measure to impose rent control in manufactured housing, which had previously come close to passing the full House, was not called for a vote on the chamber floor.

Also stopped was Senator Mike Simmons’ [SB 1728](https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=1728&GAID=18&GA=104&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=160752&SessionID=114), which sought to significantly limit landlords’ ability to utilize proper credit reporting in assessing prospective tenants.

Another prominent piece of legislation sponsored by Senator Simmons (and Rep. Nabeela Syed in the House), [HB 3564](https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=3564&GAID=18&GA=104&DocTypeID=HB&LegID=162254&SessionID=114), was ultimately stopped as well. This bill and [SB 1964](https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/billstatus.asp?DocNum=1964&GAID=18&GA=104&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=161355&SessionID=114) sponsored by Senate Leader Cristina Castro, sought to ban landlords statewide from charging many fees currently utilized in the market today. At the urging of Senate leadership and staff, we undertook extensive negotiations with Senator Simmons and Senate Democratic legal counsel on behalf of CAA. With the assistance of key membership committee members and CAA leadership, we offered reasonable alternatives to language offered to Senator Simmons by housing advocates. Unfortunately, an agreement could not be reached. Fortunately, the bill was not ultimately called for a vote on the Senate floor before the chamber adjourned in the early morning hours of June 1. We are prepared for this matter, and perhaps this exact bill, to be revived by Senator Simmons at the behest of housing advocates when the legislature returns to session in October.

Finally, as we exhibited in our handling of HB 3564, in the progressive Illinois General Assembly, it is occasionally necessary to work to find common ground with reasonable legislators in Springfield. CAA engaged with advocates of a bill sponsored by Rep. Dagmara Avelar to prohibit the practice of naming minors in eviction legal proceedings. Working with CAA legal counsel, we were able to craft a compromise that worked for CAA members’ attorneys and was acceptable to the advocates and Rep. Avelar. We believe compromising where we can bolsters CAA’s credibility for circumstances like HB 1564 when compromise could not be achieved. This credibility serves us well when we have to ask legislators to oppose a measure we could not negotiate successfully.

We are honored to serve as CAA’s liaison and advocate before state government.