



Legislative Report

Primary elections
set stage for November

LAST MONTH'S PRIMARY ELECTION RESULTS have set the stage for statewide races that will drag on for nine months. Democrat Governor Pat Quinn narrowly bested Comptroller Dan Hynes for a shot at a full term in the fall. His opponent, either state Sen. Bill Brady or Sen. Kirk Dillard, is still being determined at press time as final votes are being counted.

It seems like Illinois just cannot escape getting giggles from the national press corps when it comes to our politics. The primary produced some more fodder for the grist when Democrats nominated a candidate for lieutenant governor who, it turns out, had been previously arrested for domestic battery for holding a knife to his then-girlfriend's throat. Public pressure forced that candidate to step down from the ticket within days of his nomination. Jason Plummer outspent all of his opponents combined to capture the GOP nod there.

There were few surprises elsewhere among statewide races. Incumbents Lisa Madigan and Jesse White will be running for re-election as attorney general and secretary of state, respectively, against much lesser known Republican challengers. Judy Baar Topinka

is hoping for a comeback as state comptroller against democrat state Representative David Miller. The GOP's state Sen. Dan Rutherford is hoping to become state treasurer, running against that office's current chief of staff, Robin Kelly. At the top of the ticket, state Treasurer Alexi Giannoulias will take on Republican Congressman Mark Kirk for the Barack Obama U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Roland Burris.

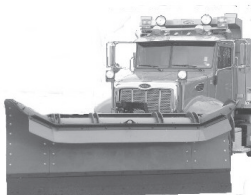
There was a spattering of primary races for state legislative seats, but only one incumbent representative was voted out of office. Rep. Suzie Bassi (R-Palatine) was upset in her bid to win re-nomination. So the feared voter upheaval so many incumbents feared before the election failed to materialize—at least in this election.

Election year politics will likely have an impact on legislative deliberations this spring. Legislators running for re-election are unlikely to tackle many controversial items. Leaders in the House and Senate, along with the Governor, are scrambling to find a way to balance a state budget well out of balance without consideration of a tax increase. As the state puts off tough decisions on finances, it finds itself ever deeper in debt and unable to keep up with obligations.

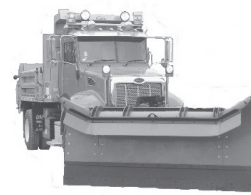
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