



Legislative Report

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Lawmakers face veto session calendar in advance of January

THE ILLINOIS LEGISLATURE is slogging its way through the November-December fall veto session in an effort to clean up the schedule left for the 99th General Assembly before a new one is sworn in next January. Obviously the largest item left is approval of a state budget that would get them through the remainder of the fiscal year at the end of June 2017. Leaders have met, but little progress has been reported.

The legislature and Governor wrapped things up last June with a rubber stamp on a temporary stop-gap budget that lasted until December 31, with the exception of an education budget that extended all the way through next June. That means, without a full extension passed by the end of this month, we'll be back in the limited payment modes that only allow for state spending on programs that are court-ordered.

A new General Assembly will be sworn in on January 11, so the thought of using an outgoing legislature to do any heavy lifting will expire then. It is expected that the

legislature may schedule additional days in early January before it adjourns *sine die* prior to the 11th.

Once again next year, townships can expect to be the target of many legislative proposals coming from lawmakers who believe we are actually responsible for high property taxes in the state. Even though townships make up less than 2½ percent of the average property tax bill here, there are those that love making us the culprit in ever-increasing tax bills back home. And they also overlook the fact that we provide vital services at a cost that is lower than any other type of local government.

We were successful in defeating every bill last year that we opposed, more than two dozen. But that won't stop a new deluge of proposals from those who see some political gain from introducing them. We need, once again, as we did last year and before that, to be on guard to engage our legislators to explain these facts and ask for their help in beating back what appear to be demagogic efforts that use us as the whipping boy.

Election results change some seats to GOP

Estimates place the money spent on legislative elections at more than \$80 million this past year, but no structural change in either House took place. Republicans did make some gains, however. They picked up four net seats in the House of Representatives and two more in the Senate. In the House, they removed the Speaker's mathematical veto-proof majority of 71 votes, with the new margin now at 67-51. The Senate Democrats retained its veto-proof edge, but lowered its majority from 39-20, to 37-22.



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