



# Legislative Report

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## *Landing Spaceships*

LEGISLATORS OFTEN TALK ABOUT trying to “land the airplane” while in the midst of difficult negotiations on a contentious bill. But this year the volume, complexity, and controversy of the issues facing the General Assembly was unprecedented. Controversial revenue generating bills were tied to the budget and unpopular tax increases would be necessary to pass a capital bill, which was universally acknowledged to be much needed.

The historical difficulty of trying to pass a balanced budget, along with an ambitious agenda from a newly elected Governor—and a much-needed infrastructure package—led one exasperated legislator to perfectly sum up the experience, “We aren’t trying to land airplanes this year, we are trying to land spaceships.”

This became particularly true when after months of negotiations on the various bills, it appeared that the talks for compromise had completely fallen apart. On Friday, May 31st, the day of adjournment, the Speaker of the House announced that session would not end and would instead continue through the weekend and possibly longer. Rumors swirled that talks were unsalvageable and that session may extend well into June. However, after furious hours-long negotiations between the four leaders and the Governor, it appeared a deal would be reached, and it was. Despite the fact it took the legislature two extra days of overtime session, they certainly did end up landing those spaceships. Below we will look at a number of the bills that led to what many are calling a session for the ages.

### **Budget**

This year there were a total of three budget bills that needed to be passed in order to enact the bipartisan budget that both sides are calling balanced. All total the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Budget spends \$40.1 billion and is expected to generate a \$150 million surplus which will be used to help reduce the state’s backlog of bills.

**SB 262** (*Public Act 101-0007*) – Contains various appropriations and reappropriations for the FY20. Details various spending line items.

**SB 689** (*Public Act 101-0009*) – Contains multiple requests from House GOP for changes in various credits and incentives related to FY20 operating revenues.

**SB 1814** (*Public Act 101-0010*) – Budget Implemen-

tation Act

### **Capital/Gaming**

Two capital bills were passed: one for vertical and the other for horizontal. In order to fund the projects in each bill, a number of revenue sources were included in both.

**SB 1939 – Horizontal Capital Bill.** Contains a 19 cent increase on the Motor Fuel Tax. Increases vehicle registration fees by \$50. Increases registration fees for commercial vehicles by \$100. Increases Diesel fuel differential by 5 cents. Makes various other fee increases related to vehicles.

**SB 690 – Vertical Capital Bill.** Contains the creation of the Sports Wagering Act which will legalize sports betting. Expands Video Gaming. Adds six more land-based casinos and allows Horseracing tracks to have casinos. Increases the cigarette tax. Expands or implements other fee or tax increases projected together with the above increases to generate over \$900 million annually.

### **Governor Agenda**

Governor Pritzker had perhaps the most ambitious and successful first year of any Governor this side of the Civil War. Much of his agenda was passed early in the session, however he still had several key issues that were being worked on along with the Budget and Capital bills. The biggest of which was SB 1438.

**SB 1438 – Legalizes Adult Use Recreational Cannabis.** The bill allows for municipalities and counties to adopt ordinances to prohibit or severely limit a business establishment’s location, but may not prohibit the non-public use or ability for home growing as long as such usage conforms to the regulations in the act.

The Governor has already signed the bills comprising the budget package, but the majority of the bills passed by the General Assembly this year are still awaiting action by the Governor. HB 348, the bill that would allow township electors in McHenry County to petition for a referendum to dissolve a township and abolishes road districts of 15 miles or less in McHenry and Lake County, is still waiting for the Governor to take action. To that end if you have not already sent a letter to the Governor’s office asking him to veto this bill please do so. If you need help drafting a letter please contact the TOI offices and ask for help.

