



# Legislative Report

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## *After the election ... it's back to work*

**I**DON'T KNOW THAT ONE would call this past election season a "fun" time, but it was certainly intriguing. A presidential race that bombarded our senses 24/7 with claims and counterclaims that pushed the envelope compared to any past election campaign. Record-breaking millions of dollars being spent on races for seats in the Illinois General Assembly.

It all seemed to divert our attention away from the really serious problems facing the state of Illinois and the mountain of work that awaits us now that the shenanigans of the campaign season are behind us.

And it's time for township officials to gear up—once again—and engage your legislators in the fight to stave off so many anti-township proposals that will be floating around after their rejection last spring.

### **Get your ideas heard**

The first point of engagement for you is to communicate your thoughts for pro-township legislation to TOI's legislative committee. It's a formal process for the organization to adopt and advance individual pieces of legislation that come from you. But it's simple for you to participate. All you have to do is respond to the recently circulated survey requesting ideas for legislative proposals. If the legislative committee believes your idea has merit, we will do all the rest of the work; drafting the proposal into bill form, finding a sponsor, and shepherding it through the General Assembly. It's how all of TOI's legislative agenda is developed.

How many times do you come up with a great idea for a program or policy at the township level only to be told: "No. It's against state law." Well now is your chance to change that state law. Be sure that it's Illinois statute

that addresses your issue, and not a local ordinance or federal law. And while I'm sure we agree with the premise in most cases, there's not much we can do about balancing the state budget, or making Republicans and Democrats work together, or any other worthy goal of such. But if it's a practical change to an Illinois statute that enables you to do your job and deliver services better to township constituents, then we'll take a crack at it!


### **Let's remind our legislators how important township government is**

We emerged unscathed last year from one of the biggest threats we have ever faced in terms of anti-township proposals from the Illinois legislature. Not one proposal that TOI opposed survived. But, unfortunately, we have not seen the last of these initiatives. They will be back in recycled form again in 2017. They run the gamut of ways to reduce or eliminate township government, or parts and parcels thereof. They overlook the good things that townships do, the fact that we do it for less tax money than any other unit of government, and that we are the closest to our constituents.

But these initiatives can often generate some positive headlines back home under the guise of saving money. So they remain popular and politically expedient for many legislators.

We need to repeat all the good work we did a year ago. Engage your legislators early and often. Stop by and visit or—better yet—invite them to the township office or garage where they can see what you actually do. And let them know you are watching them and how they vote.

In addition, communicate with your constituents and news media. Letters to the editor always help the cause. Let those who are served by township government know about the threats to your level of government and who's behind them.

The next year in Springfield begins right now. And we can't start without you. Get those ideas for legislation to the TOI office. And get your battle gear back on as we face another daunting year in the legislature. We all need to be together on this one. 

Emails are sent to alert our officials on pending legislation that would help or harm township government. Please make sure that if you wish to receive these alerts, our office has your correct email address. Thank you for your help!