



State Legislative Advocacy 101

Southminster Presbyterian Church
March 17, 2024

Agenda

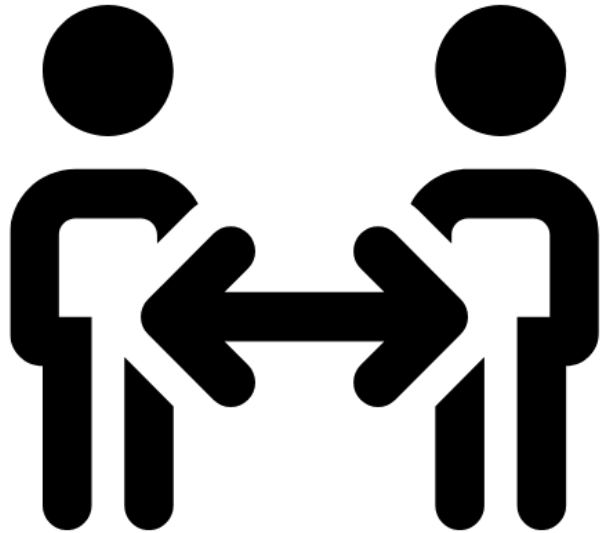
1. Overview and introductions
2. How bills become laws in Illinois
3. How to build support for issues that matter to you
4. Questions and answers





INTRODUCTIONS

ACTIVITY: Introductions



- Say Hello!
- Let us know if you need help finding your state legislators

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About **Restore Justice**

We work on state-level policy reforms that impact people serving extreme prison sentences and their families, with an emphasis on youth and emerging adults.



Focus Areas

To end extreme sentences imposed on our youth



SENTENCING REFORM

Abolish Juvenile
Life without
Parole

Make gun
enhancements
discretionary

Make mandatory
minimums
discretionary

Reform
Accountability

Reform
felony
murder

MEANINGFUL PATHWAYS TO RELEASE

Create a
resentencing
pathway

Roll back
"truth in
sentencing"

CONDITIONS OF INCARCERATION

Limit
isolated
confinement

Family
rights



HOW BILLS BECOME LAWS IN ILLINOIS

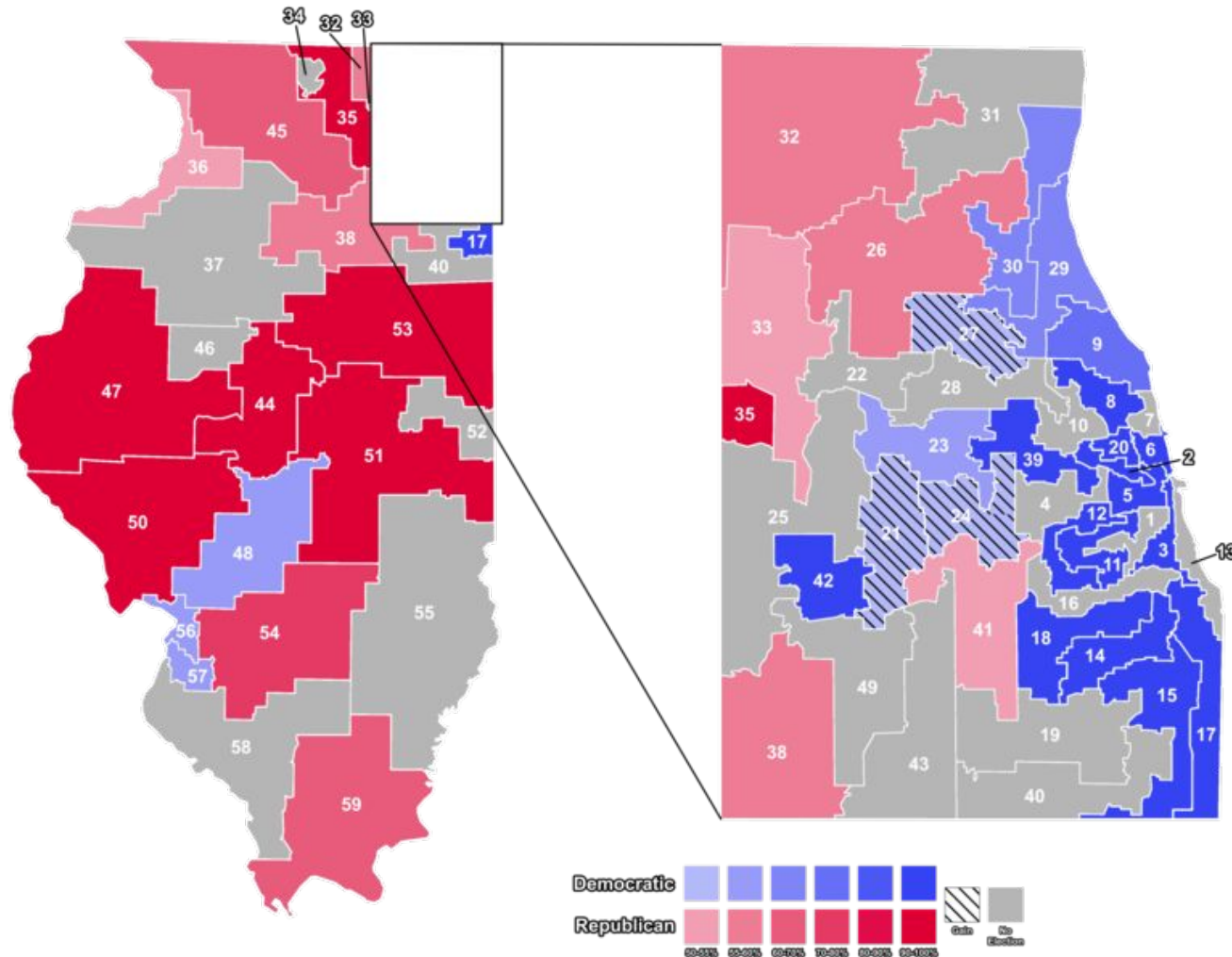
State Legislative Advocacy



We can work to influence LAWS by influencing PEOPLE.

- Legislators are people elected to make laws.
- There are **177** legislators in illinois.
- Each legislator represents a district.
- There are **59** Senate districts and **118** House districts:
 - Two House districts are contained in every Senate district.
 - Every home address is linked to one state representative and one state senator.

Who Makes the Laws



59 State Senators

118 State Representatives

You have **one of each**

Lawmaker Demographics



State Senate: 59

MAJORITY DEM, MALE, WHITE

- 40 Dems, 19 Repubs
- 68% white, 20% Black, 10% Latinx, 2% A/PI
- 58% men, 42% women

Senate President: Don Harmon

State House: 118

MAJORITY DEM, MALE, WHITE

- 78 Dems, 40 Repubs
- 64% white, 19% Black, 10% Latinx, 7% A/PI
- 59% men, 41% women

House Speaker: Emanuel “Chris” Welch

The Math

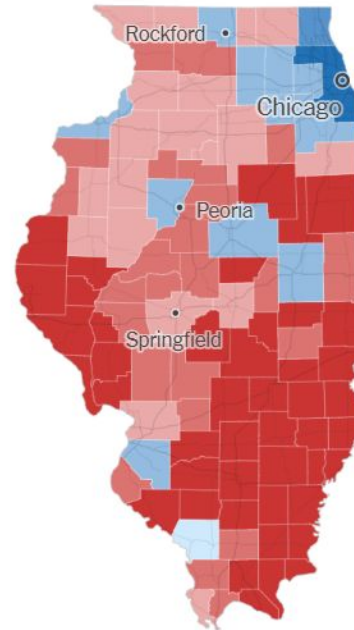
Senate

Regular session

30

Veto Override

37



2020 PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION RESULTS

House

Regular session

60

Veto Override

71



Players



House



Senate



Governor



Constituents

Proponents

Opponents

Stakeholders

SCENARIO: The Ice Cream Bill

Your community organization believes all Illinois children should get ice cream on their fifth birthday, subsidized by the state general revenue. Ice cream manufacturers love the idea. Other parent groups in your area are pleased because COVID-19 has been hard on them, their kids, and the ice cream industry, and they feel like we could all use a little ice cream. Your local State Representative agrees to file a bill.



SCENARIO: The Plot Thickens...

The bill is assigned to committee. Your sponsor calls you 5 days before the committee hearing to give you an update.

The cake lobby, which is most active in Southern Illinois, asked you to drop the bill. The Illinois Dental Health Association has also expressed concerns. She tells you the bill may not make it through committee, and neither the Democratic nor the Republican caucus will take a positive position on it, leaving legislators to vote their conscience.

She did not realize it would be so hard. She seems on the fence about how to proceed, and asks you what your group thinks the next step should be...



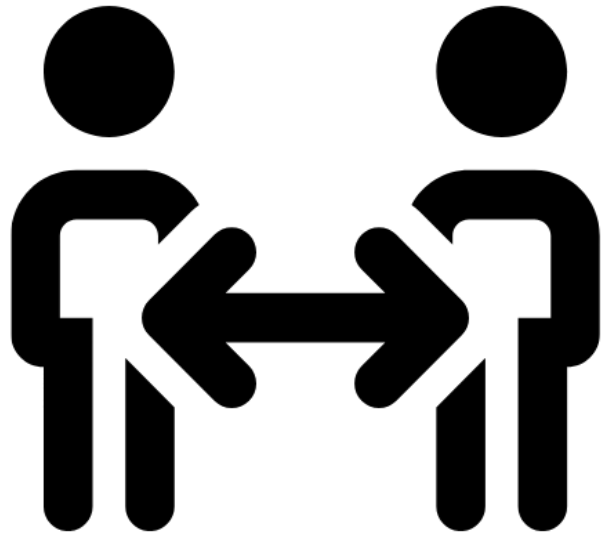
SCENARIO: A Crossroads...

Do more hard work (lobby more people, in more places, in different ways)

Negotiate with opponents to make the bill more palatable to them



What Would YOU Do?



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Would you change the bill?

If so, how?

When We Make Laws in Illinois



YEAR ONE of
103rd ILGA



YEAR TWO of
103rd ILGA



How a Bill Becomes a Law



1

SPONSOR
FILES BILL



2

ASSIGNED TO
COMMITTEE,
COMMITTEE
VOTES



3

IF PASS, FULL
CHAMBER
VOTES



4

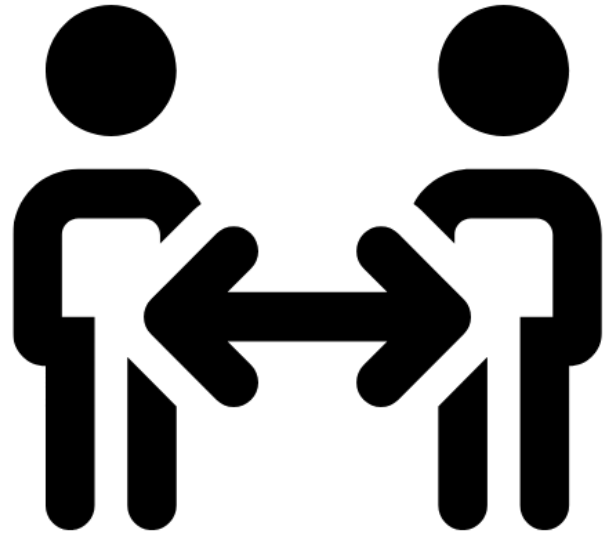
IF PASS,
REPEAT IN
OTHER
CHAMBER



5

IF PASS,
GOVERNOR
SIGNS

ACTIVITY: How a Bill Becomes a Law



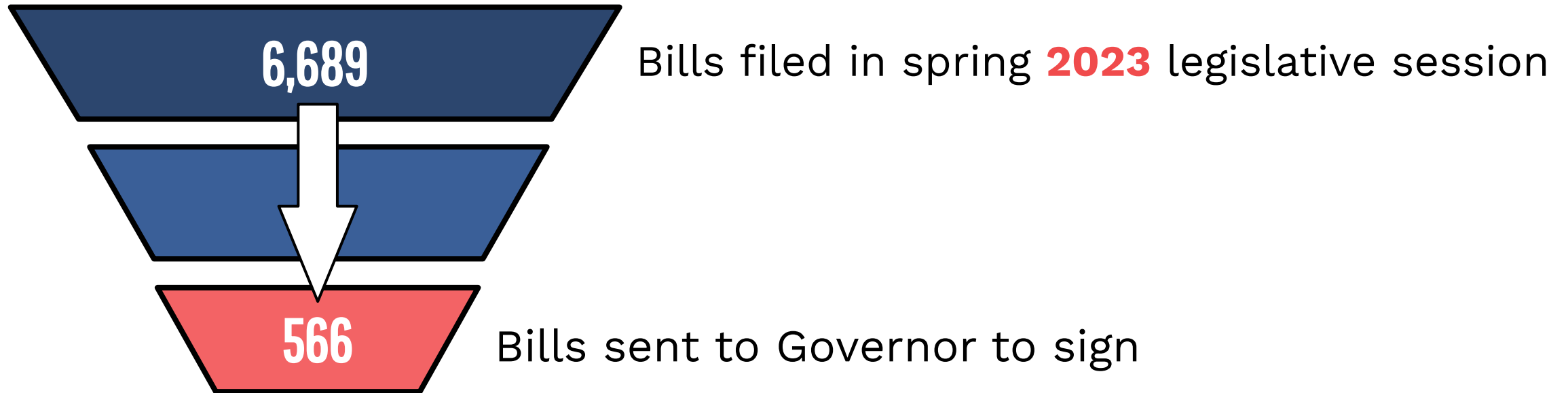
It's time to move around!

The 2024 Season



- 1/16 - Session begins
- 1/19 - Deadline for Senate and House LRB Requests
- 2/9 - Deadline for introduction of bills in the Senate and House
- 2/21 - Governor's State of the State and Budget Address
- 3/15 - Committee deadline for Senate bills
- 3/19 - **Primary election**
- 4/5 - Committee deadline for House bills
- 4/12 - Deadline for Senate bills 3rd reading
- 4/19 - Deadline for House bills 3rd reading
- 5/3 - Committee deadline for Senate bills in the House and House bills in the Senate
- 5/17 - Deadline for 3rd reading of House bills in the Senate and 3rd reading of Senate bills in the House
- 5/24 - **Adjournment**
- 5/25-31 - Contingent Session/Budget Hold Dates
- Veto session TBD

How Many Bills Become a Law?



8% Passage Rate



HOW TO BUILD SUPPORT FOR ISSUES THAT MATTER TO YOU

Where Do You Fit in the Equation?



What You Can Do For Your Team



Your job is to help **make the math work:** can you get **60** House votes and **30** Senate votes for the bill?

Start by developing a relationship with the **1** of **60** and **1** of **30** people most accountable to you.

- How can you secure **your** 1 of 118 and 1 of 59?
- What can you learn from **your** 1 of 118 and 1 of 59?

CHAT: How to Build a Relationship ?



ACTIVITY: Do your homework

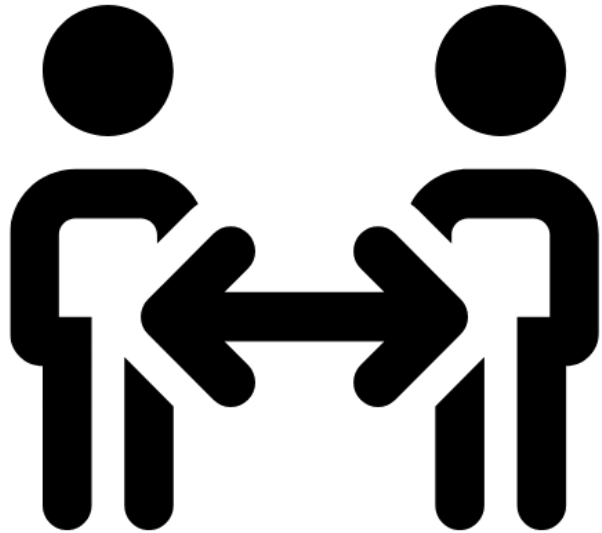


SAVE THIS
ACTIVITY
FOR LATER!



- Find out how your legislators feel about an issue you care about - WITHOUT asking them!
- What can you find out looking at their state **bio**? www.ilga.gov
- What can you find out looking at their **DONOR LIST**? illinoissunshine.org
- What can you find out on a **Google** search, clicking on the “News” tab?
- What do they post on **social media**?

ACTIVITY: Reach Out



- Write a **note** to your state representative or senator.
- Introduce yourself, **thank them for their service**, and tell them what you care about the most as a constituent.
- Handwrite, email, or send through their website.

ACTIVITY: Connect with Restore Justice



Join our
ADVOCACY TEAM
restorejustice.org

ACTION TEAM
restorejusticeillinois.org

Next Steps



- Identify an **issue** and connect with an **organization** you are passionate about
- Do your **homework**
- **Reach out** to your state senator and representative. Share your issue and start building a relationship

Questions?

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THANK YOU



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@RJ_Illinois

www.restorejustice.org

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STAY IN TOUCH!



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Restore Justice



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