

Illinois Goes Deep Blue

IRTBA Insider

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Democrats in Illinois will now hold all of the statewide offices for the first time since, well, never. They also scored impressive wins in the Illinois House and Senate, picking up seats for super-majority status in both chambers.

Governor

J.B. Pritzker won a decisive 14.4 point victory over **incumbent Governor Bruce Rauner**. Governor-Elect Pritzker has told IRTBA leadership during the campaign that he is committed to improving the state's transportation infrastructure, and is not ruling out any new funding source to make it happen, including expanded tolling, gas tax increases, and VMT. The Pritzker campaign was supported by virtually every labor union in Illinois, making a very pro-labor administration inevitable. Pritzker and Illinois Democrats ran on a platform of instituting a progressive income tax, which they claim will shore up the state's shaky finances and fund expanded social services. The [Pritzker campaign platform is available here](#). The IRTBA will work with the incoming administration to ensure that they are properly informed about the transportation industry, improving state agency efficiencies, and the economic benefits associated with investment in transportation infrastructure.

AG Race

State Senator Kwame Raoul defeated **Erika Harold 54 percent to her 43 percent** in the race to succeed **Lisa Madigan** as Illinois Attorney General. The AG's office defends the State of Illinois in litigation, promotes legislative changes, authors opinions which guide policy, pursues litigation in state and federal court, and can have significant impacts on industry in labor and environmental matters. Attorney General-Elect Raoul received a large infusion of labor contributions, and a donation of \$1 million from **House Speaker Mike Madigan** in the closing weekend of the campaign due to doubts about his ability to win. Those doubts obviously were not well founded.

Illinois House

House Speaker Michael J. Madigan has regained a super-majority in the Illinois House by picking up enough seats to have at least 72 members in his caucus. The tighter races that have not been called might give the Democrats two more seats. Republicans lost a number of suburban Chicago seats, including **House Transportation Committee** members **Christine Winger** and **David Olsen**. House Democrats have claimed to support a more robust transportation program, once they win the Governor's office. The IRTBA will advocate to make sure they keep their word. Stay tuned for news on changes in leadership and key committee assignments.

Illinois Senate

Senate President John Cullerton added to his super-majority with at least 39, versus 18 Republicans; **Republican State Senator Mike Connolly** was up by only 12 votes, and vote by mail ballots have yet to be counted. President Cullerton has long supported a gas tax increase, additional fees for electric vehicles, and a VMT. An ill-considered, anti-VMT, non-binding referenda item appeared in a few counties in a Republican attempt to stir up their base; that effort received scant attention, went nowhere, and the IRTBA has strongly criticized those behind this stunt.

U.S. Congress

The entire nation voted for a divided government yesterday by electing a Democratic majority to the U.S. House of Representatives. In Illinois, **Peter Roskam** and **Randy Hultgren** lost their seats to **Sean Casten** and **Lauren Underwood**. Republican **Rodney Davis**, who sits on the House Transportation & Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, held onto his seat. Fellow House Republicans **Mike Bost**, **Adam Kinzinger**, **Darin LaHood** and **John Shimkus** also won re-election. That leaves only five Republicans in the 18-member Illinois Congressional delegation. A Democratic House majority will bring in a new House T&I Committee Chair, likely **Peter DiFazio (D-Ore.)**. In addition, Illinois Democrats on that committee, **Dan Lipinski** and **Cheri Bustos**, will be ranking members. Lipinski is rumored to be named the next Chair of the Rail Subcommittee. While the change in the House may prove to be a headache for the **Trump Administration** in many respects, Democrats have claimed that the one area with which they agree with the President is a big infrastructure program. The U.S. Senate Republican majority actually increased by at least two, while Montana and Florida remain too close to call. Neighboring states Indiana and Missouri dumped their Democrat Senators for Republicans. No Illinois Senate seats were up this year.