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Illinois General Election 2026
What began as another run-the-board night for Democrats in Illinois grew into a crashing blue wave, taking all statewide constitutional offices, keeping a large Congressional delegation, and expanding Democrat supermajorities in the Illinois House and the Illinois Senate even more than expected. Republicans never gained traction in the 2026 races, having to overcome a combination of factors, including the national environment and President Trump's dismal approval ratings, Pritzker's personal wealth and self-funded PACs, strong Democrat fundraising, a lack of strong leadership at the top of the ticket, changing demographics in formerly GOP-heavy suburban districts, and legislative maps heavily favoring Democrat candidates. From top down, Democrat candidates invoked Trump in every race and rode the midterm blue wave to an historic victory.

Governor
Democrat Governor **JB Pritzker** ran for a rare third term as governor, this time with a new Lieutenant Governor. Juliana Stratton campaigned for US Senate, so Governor Pritzker called on his former Deputy Director and a previous state representative, Christian Mitchell, to run with him.

The Pritzker/Mitchell team soundly defeated Darren Bailey and his running mate Aaron del Mar with a seemingly larger margin than last time. Bailey lost to Pritzker in 2022 by 12 points. Collin Corbett, an independent candidate for Illinois governor, also failed to gain attention and received less than four percent of the total vote.

US Senate
With the retirement of longtime Senator Dick Durbin, Illinois voters had an open seat to elect in the US Senate. (Tammy Duckworth-D holds the other Illinois seat in the US Senate.) Democrat **Juliana Stratton**, Governor Pritzker's current lieutenant governor, made fighting Trump her central theme and carried the night against Republican attorney Don Tracy.

Attorney General
Kwame Raoul easily won his third term as attorney general against Bob Fioretti, a civil rights attorney and former Chicago City Council alderman.

Secretary of State

Secretary of State **Alexi Giannoulias** (D) rolled over Diane Harris of Joliet for secretary of state, but he is now running for Chicago mayor. If he is successful, Governor Pritzker will appoint a new secretary of state for the first two years of the four-year term, and candidates will run again for the remainder of the term in 2028.

Comptroller
Comptroller Susanna Mendoza chose not to run for reelection and instead is running for Chicago mayor. State Representative Margaret Croke, who chairs the House Financial Institutions Committee and has been an unwavering legislative champion for community bankers, went on to an easy victory in the general election, defeating Bryan Drew, an attorney from southern Illinois.

Treasurer
Treasurer **Michael Frerichs** won his fourth term as State Treasurer handily over Max Solomon. Frerichs was first elected to the office in 2014.

US Congress
Democrats currently hold 14 of the 17 Congressional seats in Illinois. Five seats had open races this fall, all in the Chicago area. Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller will replace Robin Kelly in the 2nd District. State Representative LaShawn Ford won the 7th district, long held by Danny Davis. Former Congresswoman Melissa Bean is now back in the 8th in place of Raja Krishnamoorthi, and Evanston Mayor and former State Senator Daniel Biss prevailed in an aggressive primary when Jan Schakowsky retired and now will represent the 9th District. Chuy Garcia handpicked Patty Garcia with hopes of her winning the 4th District race, and she did. The other 12 incumbents won their reelection bids, so the **delegation remains 14 Democrats and 3 Republicans**.

Illinois Senate
Because the state constitution requires staggered terms in the Illinois Senate, 39 of the 59 seats were up for election this year, and six of those were open seats. Senate Democrats had few contested races to protect but were aggressive in flipping retiring Don DeWitte's seat and taking advantage of the Democratic wave in others. The Senate supermajority now increases from 40 Democrats to **45 Democrats over 14 Republicans**, assuming Republican Senator Dave Syverson prevails in the 35th District.

Illinois House
All 118 districts in the Illinois House were up for election this cycle. Democrats now hold a large supermajority with 78 Democrats and 40 Republicans but will have an even wider gap in January after winning at least four more seats (all in the shifting suburbs) with three more still pending.

The Democrat expansion to at least **82 Democrats and 36 Republicans** is reminiscent of Trump's first midterm election in 2018 when Democrats gained seven seats in the House and three in the Senate.

Comprehensive Election Recap
Click here for a more thorough recap of the 2026 mid-term election in Illinois. Note that some races remain too close to call, and it could be up to a week before remaining ballots arrive by mail.

Veto Session Preview

The Illinois General Assembly is scheduled to return to Springfield on Nov. 17-19 and Dec. 1-3 for the fall veto session. With Democrats firmly in control of both chambers and the governor's office, there hasn't been much action in the way of vetoes in the past several years, but legislators can still use the gathering as an opportunity to take up other matters. High on the list of priorities are a deal to keep the Chicago Bears in Illinois and new regulations for data centers. Governor Pritzker has put a temporary halt on tax incentives for new data centers, but unions and other groups are interested in lifting the moratorium to promote economic development. Environmental groups are expected to use the data center debate to push for more stringent energy policy.

While the clock is ticking on these high-priority items, they don't necessarily have to be resolved during the veto session. Legislative leaders have already indicated a willingness to hold a special lame duck session of the General Assembly in early January between the first of the year and the swearing-in of the newly elected GA on Jan. 13, 2027.

CBAI's top legislative priority remains the repeal of the Illinois Interchange Fee Prohibition Act (IFPA). We've spent the summer continuing to educate lawmakers about the dangers of this misguided law. While our message has been generally well received, legislative leaders seem unwilling to take up our repeal legislation (HB 1822/ SB 1798) during the veto or lame duck sessions. Instead, they continue to defer to the ongoing court case as a reason to delay legislative action. Implementation of the IFPA is delayed until July 1, 2027, so our efforts to repeal the law will continue into the next General Assembly.

Seeking Legislative Ideas for the 2027 Session
As the CBAI Governmental Relations team begins preparing for the upcoming spring legislative session, we'd like to hear your ideas and suggestions for potential legislation CBAI should consider pursuing.

Are there issues you are seeing at your bank that could be addressed through a change to Illinois law or regulation? This could include outdated statutes, unnecessary burdens or costs, changes needed to reflect current banking practices or technology, or areas where additional clarity or flexibility would be helpful.

The Legislation and Regulation Committee will meet next month to review and discuss issues affecting community banking and approve CBAI's legislative priorities for the upcoming session. Please send us any ideas or suggestions you would like the committee to consider.

ON THE FEDERAL SIDE

The OCC Revises/Updates Its Resource for Community Banks to Lodge Their Complaints/Concerns About Payments/Check Fraud
The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) has announced a new email domain that will better enable community banks to escalate their complaints and concerns to the OCC about the problems they are confronting with the banks the agency regulates, for all types of financial fraud, including not being promptly and reasonably reimbursed for fraudulent check returns, ACH and wire transfer fraud. CBAI urges all Illinois community banks to use this valuable resource. Bankers can continue to use the previous contact information for the OCC; those requests will be funneled into the new system. **Read article and find the new email domain**

CBAI Continues Its Involvement with a Project to Revise the UCC to Address Check Fraud

Over a year ago, CBAI joined with the ICBA and a group of community bankers on their Check Fraud Task Force in an effort to revise the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) to address check fraud, including the prompt and reasonable reimbursement by *banks of first deposit* for check fraud returns. **Read Article**

This involvement in revising the UCC builds on CBAI's multi-year effort to inform the banking regulators to address check fraud in banking and particularly to hold the largest banks in the nation accountable for opening (and allowing to operate) fraudulent accounts – without which the perpetration of this type of financial fraud would not be possible. **Read CBAI letter to the banking regulators**

Most recently, and with input from community bankers and CBAI, the ICBA proposed updates to the Joint Study Committee of the UCC that would allocate losses, establish standards of conduct between banks, and substantially improve community banks' ability to mitigate check fraud. **Read ICBA's letter to the Joint Study Committee.**

CBAI Supports Targeted Revisions and a Modernization of the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA)

In a comment letter to the OCC and FDIC dated October 9, 2026, CBAI urged the regulators to revise and modernize the CRA in a manner that makes it reasonable and properly focused without increasing the regulatory burden on community banks in recognition of their exemplary performance in serving their customers and communities – fairly and honestly. CBAI expressed its support for the new asset threshold for small banks of up to $1 billion in assets that would apply to 85% of our members, the exemption of complex data collection and reporting for banks under $10 billion in assets, and the posting of the Public File and Notices on the banks' website. **Read Article about CBAI's comment letter to the regulators**



Notes from Springfield

As we wrap up the November 2026 election, we move quickly into the next cycle for municipal races in 2027. Some local races, including the Chicago mayor election, will be held February 23, 2027. If no candidate receives a majority of votes, a runoff election will be held April 6. Prominent candidates are Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias, Comptroller Susana Mendoza, lobbyist John Kelly, Congressman Mike Quigley, and Mayor Brandon Johnson for reelection.

Johnson sees himself as the progressive candidate but enters the race with a low approval rating and less than $1 million. Giannoulias already has $22 million for campaign funding.

Inauguration for the governor and constitutional officers will be held on January 11, with legislators for the new General Assembly sworn in on January 13. Caucus leaders are historically elected during the fall Veto Session, but some House Democrats are reportedly circulating petitions asking House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch not to run for reelection as speaker, meaning the caucus may potentially look to coalesce around a new speaker candidate.

Governor Pritzker will soon need to answer the question of whether he is running for the Democrat nomination for President in 2028, and if so, will he step aside or unofficially allow Lieutenant Governor Christian Mitchell to run the administration? If Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias wins the race for Chicago mayor, who will the governor appoint to serve the first two years of the secretary of state term?

Capitol Fax Blog

Did You Know That CBAI Members Have Free Access to the Capitol Fax Blog?
Want more insight into Illinois politics? The Capitol Fax Blog offers a daily insider perspective. It's a subscription service, but CBAI offers community bankers access for free in the Members Only section of cbai.com. Need a members-only password? Just reach out to **Stacy Workman** and she will assist you.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact **Jerry Peck** or **Megan Peck** of the CBAI Governmental Relations Team.