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## Wins and Losses, Praise and Criticism, for Pritzker and Democrats in Year One

*Party leaders, political observers assess past year, look ahead to 2020*

*by Jerry Nowicki, Rebecca Anzel and Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois*

A tumultuous year in Illinois politics draws to its close as the historic legislative accomplishments of May and June give way to a flurry of ongoing federal investigative activity, resignations and indictments.

Central to the story of 2019 is Gov. J.B. Pritzker, a Chicago Democrat and billionaire who spent more than \$170 million of his estimated \$3.4 billion fortune on a successful bid to unseat one-term incumbent Republican Bruce Rauner.

During the campaign, Pritzker positioned himself as a foil to Rauner and President Donald Trump and promised to usher in a wave of progressive policies. He also promised a new era of bipartisanship after four stagnant years that

included a two-year budget impasse, which led to a ballooning backlog of unpaid bills and cuts to many state services.

Rauner's unpopularity, combined with a national "Blue Wave" that saw Democrats retake several statehouses and governors' offices across the country, helped Pritzker to a near 16-point electoral victory and propelled Illinois Democrats to veto-proof supermajorities in both chambers of the state Legislature.

Pritzker and fellow Democrats got to work quickly when the legislative session began, parlaying that electoral momentum into the February passage of a phased-in increase of the state's minimum wage to \$15 hourly by 2025.

As the months progressed, Pritzker worked with the General Assembly to turn several other campaign promises into legislative victories — legalization of adult-use recreational marijuana; a massive gambling expansion including the legalization of sports betting; a \$45 billion capital infrastructure plan and the tax increases to pay for it; protection of rights to abortion in the state; and more. He also signed Illinois' operating budget with vast bipartisan support.

But perhaps the most essential piece to Pritzker's long-term agenda — one that the governor's office estimates will generate more than \$3 billion in added annual tax revenue —

cannot become law without the approval of voters.

That measure — an amendment to the state's constitution allowing lawmakers to levy higher income taxes on greater levels of income — will be on the November 2020 general election ballot.

But as the fight for the graduated tax gears up and some of the marquee policies of Pritzker's first year near their 2020 implementation dates, the FBI is in the midst of a sweeping federal probe that has led to multiple resignations, indictments and raids of lawmakers and statehouse insiders.

Meanwhile, Senate President John Cullerton (D-Chicago) announced plans to resign from his leadership post and retire from the chamber on January 19, setting up the state's first majority party legislative leadership change in a decade.

Capitol News Illinois interviewed several party leaders and political observers to look back at 2019, discuss what could be on the agenda in 2020 and how the ongoing federal probes affect the legislative process.

### **Pritzker's First Year**

Leaders of both parties agree the state took steps forward in Pritzker's first year, even if Republicans stand staunchly opposed to some of the marquee proposals advanced by Democrats.

"I thought we'd have a good session, but I did

*Continued on Page 2*

**Review***Continued from page 1*

not expect it would be quite as historic as it was,” said Sen. Don Harmon, a Democrat from Oak Park and one of five assistant majority leaders in the Senate.

The \$39.9 billion operating budget, capital infrastructure plan that relies on a doubling of the state’s motor fuel tax, massive gambling expansion and legalization of adult-use recreational marijuana all received bipartisan support.

“I think it was a good year for bipartisan solutions,” said Rep. Greg Harris, a Chicago Democrat and majority leader in the House. “Obviously, a lot of things we still disagree on, but those are philosophical things. It just goes to show that when we have common interests, we can work together to fix a lot of stuff.”

But House Minority Leader Jim Durkin, a Western Springs Republican, said while the session may have ended on a bipartisan note, that was not how it began.

“Let’s just remember how we started the year,” he said. “First thing out of the gate with the governor was pushing through, I think, a very near-sighted approach towards the minimum wage, and one that could have been resolved and could have been negotiated with the support of the business community.”

Durkin said Republicans and many business leaders wanted a minimum wage bill that would reflect regional differences across the state.

The rollout of the increase will begin in January 2020, when the wage goes from \$8.25 to \$9.25 before hitting \$10 on July 1. From 2021 to 2025, the wage will see a \$1 bump every January until it levels off at \$15.

“But the governor just took a, you know, one-size-fits-all approach toward it,” Durkin said. “And obviously to fulfill a campaign promise without, I believe, truly recognizing and respecting what the short-term and long-term effects that this will have on small businesses, nonprofits and particularly along our border communities with other states.”

Toward the end of the session, though, Durkin pushed for a series of pro-business reforms that paved the way for extensive Republican roll calls on the budget and capital bills.

Senate Minority Leader Bill Brady (R-Bloomington) agreed with Durkin and characterized the session as “the good, the bad

and the ugly” from the Republican perspective, noting he would push for changes to the minimum wage rollout based on geography in 2020.

“The governor was, in terms of communication, I think he was effective in a bipartisan way. Do I believe that he reached across the aisle on everything and worked with us? No,” he said.

Senate Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford (D-Maywood), who sponsored the minimum wage bill, said after its passage, “the session just flew.”

“I knew that we would be very progressive and energetic and ready to do the work, since we had been in a stalemate for years,” she said. “...I wasn’t surprised we were able to get it done, I just didn’t know we actually could do everything with the time frame we had.”

Christopher Mooney, a professor of state politics at the University of Illinois-Chicago, said the cooperation on several issues was largely a counterweight to four years of inaction and infighting under Rauner.

Cullerton, the Senate president, agreed.

“It was a good combination of timing, where we had some pent-up demand because of the gridlock we had under Governor Rauner; it had been 10 years since the last capital bill — and there was a bipartisan effort on the capital bill, which is great,” he said. “At the end of the session, even though we had supermajorities, we worked with Republicans and got them to vote for a bipartisan budget in terms of the revenues for the budget as well as the capital.”

As 2020 approaches, however, Mooney said he expects to see some of the bipartisan goodwill dissipate.

“Initially (Republicans) have been happy to not have Rauner, but as time goes on, and has gone on this year, I think things have been settled down into more of the party debate over issues,” he said. “And I think they’re done being happy that Rauner’s gone.”

**Graduated Tax**

The parties are prepared for “war” on at least one issue in 2020 — the graduated income tax.

“We know that there will be a war on protecting taxpayer interests when it comes to this issue of altering our state’s constitution,” Brady said. “... We want to convince the business community that this will be defeated and they shouldn’t delay their investment in Illinois, their growth in Illinois.”

Harris, the House majority leader, said he believes the added resources are needed to further investment in public education and human services.

“I think when I go around my neighborhood ... I think people get the fact that it’s appropriate for the people at the top end to pay more of their fair share and people of lesser means at the lower end of the economic scale to pay less in order to support our state,” he said.

Mooney said he expects the measure to “be an effective test of Pritzker,” and said it’s an “even money” bet as to whether it will pass.

“I think the governor’s going to have a hard time selling it. The opposition has a very good argument to say, ‘More taxes? You trust these guys?’ That’s all you have to say, we’ve been in such trouble for so long,” Mooney said.

Pritzker has already shown he is willing to

dedicate his personal fortune to support the graduated tax, contributing \$5 million in early December to the [Vote Yes for Fairness](#) ballot initiative committee which is raising support for the measure. A likely counterweight to that committee is the [Vote No on the Blank Check Amendment](#) ballot initiative committee, a business-tied group which had not reported any donations as of Dec. 18.

To pass, the measure will require approval from 60 percent of those voting on the question or the majority of those casting ballots in the election.

If the measure is successful, a rate structure passed by the General Assembly this year will kick into effect. Per that structure, those making less than \$250,000 annually will see their income tax decrease or remain at the current 4.95 percent rate, while those making above that amount will see higher rates, up to a maximum 7.99 percent for those making more than \$1 million annually.

Harris said failure of the ballot initiative would mean “some pretty tough decisions.” He pointed to public education, in which the state has increased its investment by more than \$700 million over the past two years.

“If we have to start going backward and shift more of the cost of education back to local school districts and just force more property tax increases, that’s a very bad result,” he said.

Cullerton, who will be retiring in January, said one alternative is an increase to the current 4.95 percent flat tax.

“If it doesn’t pass, the same amount of money can be garnered by a 1 percent income tax raise across the board,” he said.

When asked if he thought failure of the graduated tax initiative would mean tax increases elsewhere, Brady responded, “I hope not.”

“I hope what they (Democrats) focus on is economic growth, which will drive natural revenues to the state and increase and enhance the livelihood of our residents,” he added.

**Federal Probes and Ethics Reform**

But the graduated tax and the policies of Pritzker’s first year have been overshadowed lately by the sweeping federal probe of alleged state government corruption.

Just two months after Pritzker signed the expansive capital infrastructure plan — the first one passed by the General Assembly in a decade — the Statehouse office of one of the bill’s lead architects was raided by the FBI.

Sen. Martin Sandoval, a Chicago Democrat who was chair of the Senate Transportation Committee at the time, eventually submitted his resignation from the chamber effective Jan. 1.

News quickly followed of raids on a former lobbyist for ComEd, an electric utility company with close ties to Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan, D-Chicago. Later it was revealed that federal agents also executed search warrants in several small towns in the southwest suburbs of Chicago, apparently searching for information about red light camera contracts.

Neither Sandoval nor any ComEd representatives have been charged with wrongdoing despite the ongoing investigations.

In October, however, Rep. Luis Arroyo, a Chicago Democrat, was arrested on charges that he tried to bribe an unidentified state senator

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who was later revealed by federal affidavits to be wearing a wire for investigators.

Before any of that, state Sen. Tom Cullerton, a distant cousin of the Senate president, was indicted in August on charges he collected a salary as well as health and pension benefits from a labor union “for which he did little or no work.” He remains in the Senate.

The constant flow of headlines pertaining to alleged corruption put ethics reforms at the top of the agenda for the fall veto session, which produced measures tightening disclosure laws for lobbyists and creating a commission to study potential changes to ethics laws.

Harmon said it will be “incumbent upon” lawmakers in 2020 to “demonstrate our responsibility to voters.” He said the General Assembly should overhaul statements of economic interest and institute “an even greater separation” between legislative responsibility and fundraising obligations.

“I hope (the federal investigations) reminds us all of the importance of the public trust we hold and that we can only lead by example, even in the face of these outliers,” he added.

Lightford, the Senate majority leader, said she did not believe the ethics probe slowed down lawmakers’ progress, as those under investigation do not represent the “full body” of the Legislature.

“I think it just showed that we’re even more  
*Continued on Page 4*

## How to Help the Lost and Unconnected Among Us

By Jim Nowlan

In this season of joy, I am reminded, as we all are, fleetingly, that not all share our joy. Several years ago, for example, the circus came to my rural town. A friend and I decided to ensure that all kids could have the very few bucks needed for tickets and some cotton candy. Fifteen single-parent families were quickly identified by a local church group as needing such help.

My first delivery was to a run-down small frame home. The young mother came to the screen door. The living room behind her was a mess; a stereotypical, louche boyfriend (I assume) was lounging on the sofa, watching TV; two kids were fussing in the background. What struck me was how grateful the mother, a bit disheveled, was for the tickets (at \$6 each) and the 10 bucks for treats. What a miserable life, I thought.

Based on my chats with local teachers and social workers, there are lots of such households in rural central Illinois. I recall a county health department report that in a recent year 44 percent of all births in my county were to unmarried mothers, many maybe most ill-educated for today’s world. In 1968, when I entered the state legislature, the national figure was 10 percent.

These families are invisible to most of us. They live in farm houses that would otherwise be abandoned, or in duplex and quadplex apartments in the small towns. Only one in five fathers pays any child support, according to educated guesses by my social work friends. Most of these mothers are what I would call somewhat abandoned, lost and unconnected.

In contrast: I am working on a novel about a colorful Irish-American politician in post-World War II Chicago. This friend of mine came from a strong nuclear family, a close-knit Catholic Church parish, vibrant Irish fellowship societies, and his energetic political network. Talk about connected. If ever a problem arose, he had many supportive places to turn for help. Because of these many ties, this politico has led a successful and rewarding life.

We humans are social animals. We need

human connections and supports like those of my Chicago friend.

Today, however, many rural families are in disarray. My kindergarten teacher friend tells of one family in her school with three children, each with a different last name. Her school no longer even bothers to list fathers’ names in the pupils’ informational databases.

Further, churches today are much less central in the lives of the unconnected, and small-town community ties are weak, as the unconnected mothers move frequently from one to another, I’m told, maybe for cheaper housing.

So, when her jalopy loses its brakes, a struggling single mother has no connections to turn to find the \$500 needed to get her back on the road and to her job. “And transportation is a huge problem,” says a social worker, “as you don’t walk or take the bus to work in rural America.”

It’s enough to make this single mother turn to drink, and drugs, and many like her do, my social work friends tell me. This in turn drains scarce funds needed for the kids’ school supplies and the basics.

Governments and private charities in my area bend over backward to help fill the gap. There are literally a score, or maybe even two score, of discrete housing, heating/cooling, child care, food stamp and food pantry, job training, health care and other programs out there.

Valuable as these are, the programs are fragmented, scattered. Last time I checked the Peoria phone book, I found nine separate state social service units for mental health, rehabilitation, substance abuse, and more — all with different physical office locations, and all 40 miles drive (in a junk jalopy, if one has a car) —from my rural county.

And if, according to my social worker friends, a mother earns a good boost in pay at her low-wage job, she runs the risk of “falling off a cliff,” that is, losing her medical care card, child care, food stamps and other benefits. The mother may decide, rationally, that the relative certainty of all those programs is better than losing them to the uncertainty of a job of who knows what tenure.

What to do?

In the short term, create a sliding-scale transition from welfare to success at work. Rather than a scary cliff that drops government benefits cold turkey, reduce them slowly as a mother progresses to higher pay at work. This would provide an incentive, rather than today’s disincentive, to get off the dole.

Second, require parenting classes for mothers — and fathers where they can be found — receiving taxpayer support. Classes might include learning such basics as how to separate “wants from needs”; household budgeting, and how to create and support strong aspirations for career success among their children.

Finally, we need to think long and hard about how society can envelope the lost and unconnected. Government programs, which have proliferated, obviously won’t alone do the job.

*For many years, Jim Nowlan was a senior fellow and political science professor at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. He has worked for three unindicted governors and published a weekly newspaper in central Illinois.*

## OP ED

If your family survived both Thanksgiving and Christmas intact then apparently you should be thankful indeed. Media reports were replete with warnings about the threat to family tranquility posed by family disputes over impeachment. One newspaper urged that family impeachment discussions be banned except in a specially equipped room designated as a “tranquility room”. Another paper offered readers access on its website to both a liberal “angry uncle” bot and a conservative “angry uncle” bot so that readers could practice civilized discussion. Media warnings abounded that impeachment disputes were likely to turn family gatherings into family food fights. Why were these warnings necessary? What in the world is happening here?

First, to the extent that this threat actually existed, it is yet another distressing and depressing symptom of what political scientists have termed “hyperpartisanship”. It threatens to rend the fabric of our common culture. It is as if we stand on opposite sides of the Grand Canyon hurling imprecations at each other. No one is willing to attempt to bridge the chasm. We must find a way to rebuild the trust that prevents disagreement from degenerating into denunciation.

More importantly, there is very good reason to question the actual validity of these ominous warnings. Almost all available measures of public opinion lead to the same conclusion. We are not in fact obsessed as a nation with the unfolding impeachment drama. It does not dominate every gathering, every conversation everywhere. Rather, we are instead an increasingly bifurcated and bicoastal nation. Especially in the East, where the unfolding drama is focused, people may indeed be steeped in the impeachment stew. But, in what is frequently dubbed “flyover country,” more pressing concerns about jobs, health care, trade, and opioids tend to predominate.

This broad divide between the focus of attention in democratic precincts and the rest of the country poses a real dilemma for Democrats as they attempt to navigate the perilous shoals of impeachment. They must straddle two different and divided constituencies. They must retain the support of one without alienating the other. They, and we, must remember that, whatever is the ultimate resolution of the impeachment struggle, the 2020 election looms on the horizon. Democrats cannot avoid the genuine risk that the impeachment process poses for them in the fall. So whether you live in a Republican or a Democratic household, perhaps we should all remember the entreaty of Tiny Tim. “God bless us everyone”.

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# Researchers Suggest More State Funding for Schools would Help Lower Property Taxes

*Proposal comes ahead of special property tax task force report due out this month*

by Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois

A pair of researchers are suggesting the best way to reduce property taxes in Illinois is for the state to take over a greater share of funding for public schools and consolidate some units of local government.

Frank Manzo, policy director at the Illinois Economic Policy Institute, and Robert Bruno, director of the Project for Middle Class Renewal at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, argue in a new report that such a plan would not only hold down future property tax hikes, but it would actually help create jobs and stimulate the state's economy.

"There have been previous commissions on this issue since the 1980s," Manzo said in an interview. "Four of them, in fact, and all four unanimously found that really meaningful property tax relief for homeowners would require more state funding for public education. And in three of the four task forces, local government consolidation was also directly or indirectly called for. But these are structural problems that have frankly only deepened since those reports."

Illinois lawmakers passed Senate Bill 1932 earlier this year establishing a bipartisan Property Tax Relief Task Force. It was part of Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker's so-called "fair tax" package that also included a proposed constitutional amendment allowing the state to levy a multi-tiered "graduated" income tax in which people would pay higher rates on higher levels of income. Voters will decide on that amendment in the November 2020 elections.

Pritzker has said he wants part of the new revenue from a graduated tax — estimated at about \$3 billion a year — to go toward local property tax relief by raising the current property tax credit that property owners can take on their income taxes.

But in their report, which they shared with Capitol News Illinois ahead of its public release, Manzo and Bruno argue that the state's current property tax system and its school funding system are structurally flawed.

Specifically, they point to the fact that property taxes account for two-thirds of school funding in Illinois while the state pays only about 27 percent, or about half the national average.

They also point to the state's Property Tax Extension Limitation Law, or PTELL, which allows automatic property tax increases each year, but also caps those increases at the rate of inflation or 5 percent, whichever is less, thus preventing many local governments, and especially school districts, from raising the revenue they need.

Their proposal is to raise the state's contribution to public education by \$5 billion over four years. That would be in addition to the increased funding that comes through the state's new Evidence Based Funding formula, which calls for an added \$350 million for education funding each year.

The new money would be distributed proportionately to all 852 school districts, effectively covering their future increases under the PTELL law and enabling them to hold their property taxes flat for four years.

That plan could be paid for, they argue, through the proposed graduated income tax, a new tax on retirement income over \$100,000 and savings that could be achieved by consolidating township governments.

"It is not only good for education, for children growing up and going to school in this state," Bruno said. "But it also happens to have the added benefit of taking the burden properly off of local property owners, and shifting, modestly, some of that additional responsibility

to the state, where it actually exists everywhere else in the country but in Illinois. So I think you can make an argument — and I think you can make a winning argument — that this is where the investment needs to be going."

In their report, Manzo and Bruno note that Illinoisans pay the seventh-highest property tax rates in the country and that roughly two-thirds of all property taxes go to school districts. Average Illinois homeowners pay 7.4 percent of their income on property taxes, compared to just 4.95 percent in income taxes.

They also argue that property taxes are regressive because lower-income homeowners have much more of their total personal wealth invested in their home than upper-income people. According to the report, a household earning \$35,000 per year, for example, pays on average 10 percent of their taxable income in property taxes, compared to 7 percent for someone earning \$75,000 a year, and just 1 percent for people with yearly incomes over \$1 million.

Using economic modeling formulas, Manzo and Bruno estimate the net impact of increasing the state's investment in education and holding down school district property taxes would be to grow the Illinois economy by about \$1.2 billion and adding up to 14,000 new jobs.

Consolidating townships, they suggest, would have a smaller impact, lowering property tax bills by 0.4 percent, adding \$11 million to the economy and producing about 100 new jobs.

An alternative, they argue, was reflected this year in House Bill 320, which would have extended PTELL to all local governments, including home rule jurisdictions. It also would have unilaterally cut property tax levies by 10 percent below their 2018 level and then would have frozen property tax levies after that.

"Local governments would have been forced to slash spending on essential services by \$3 billion annually," Manzo and Bruno wrote in their report. "Although property tax relief would produce an economic stimulus, it would be completely offset by the cuts to long-term public investments — shrinking Illinois' economy by \$2 billion and 27,000 jobs."

Manzo and Bruno said they do not yet know what will be in the task force's final report, which is due to be released by Dec. 31.

## Review

*continued from page 3*

committed to making sure that the personal failures of a few members does not get in the way of the work we're doing and how we're hoping to address problems to improve our state," she said.

Harris, who was named to the ethics commission by Speaker Madigan, said it will draw upon best practices in other states, bills filed by both parties in the General Assembly, think tanks and others to craft effective ethics policies. The commission is scheduled to report its findings in March, and he said it would discuss pushing out reforms before that deadline.

"I don't want this to be a kicking-the-can-down-the-road exercise," he said. "I don't want it to be a grandstanding exercise. I want people to come in there and do real work. I think everyone in the state agrees that we have some real problems with some of this lobbyist stuff and the ethics, governmental ethics stuff, and transparency and accountability, and we need to step up and fix them."

Brady, who criticized what he said is a partisan tilt to the commission, said he will "continue to be hopeful" that it does its job.

"But at the end  
*Continued on Page 5*

of the day, what really needs to happen is all these investigations, all these concerns about members of the General Assembly wearing wires, needs to come to rest," he said. "And the federal government needs to give us some conclusion on the illegal activities which are already illegal regardless of ethics reform."

Mooney was less optimistic, saying the platitudes put before a task force don't always translate into effective legislation, because the general public is more interested in headlines proclaiming "ethics reform" than they are of minute details of the reforms.


"People that are affected by the ethics reforms, they're much more into details. ...The general public's not that interested. Obviously, they just want people to knock it off," he said. "But the people that are involved, the lobbyists and whatever and the legislators that these restrictions are imposed upon, they would like to make them as loose as possible."

## Senate Leadership Change

The surprise retirement announcement of the state's top senator earlier this year joins the federal investigations in creating uncertainty for the 2020 political agenda.

President Cullerton told reporters at the end of this year's fall veto session that his reason for leaving was to spend more time with family. Democratic Senate caucus members are scheduled to choose his successor on Sunday, Jan. 19, and several have been jockeying for position in recent weeks.

Mooney, the UIC professor, said the dynamic in the Senate will be an interesting



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one to watch in 2020.

“When you’re running for leader, you hand out goodies,” he said. “...That’s how you get it. You give out favors. But once you’re in, you owe people stuff.”

Cullerton said becoming a leader is a “humbling” experience.

“It’s very humbling, because you’re asking your peers to elevate you and you’re reminded of your shortcomings by your colleagues. They’re folks who don’t say, ‘I’ll vote for you,’ right away. You have to win them over. You’re constantly being reminded of your shortcomings. ... That’s where the humility comes in,” he said.

Cullerton said he plans to not vote on his successor and has chosen not to endorse a candidate.

While the change to the Senate will be the first in majority leadership since Cullerton assumed the office of president in 2009, House Speaker Madigan will remain in the position he has held for all but two years since 1983.

Through a spokesperson, Madigan declined to be interviewed for this article but distributed a statement to Capitol News Illinois.

“This upcoming legislative session will largely focus on passing a responsible, balanced budget. While we accomplished quite a bit last session, there’s plenty of work that remains to be done. I look forward to working with the legislative leaders and the governor on another productive session that puts working families first,” the speaker said in that statement.

**The Next Session**

The governor reiterated his commitment to passing ethics reforms and laid out some of his other 2020 agenda items at a news conference in Chicago earlier this month.

He said a top priority will be addressing the state’s \$137 billion pension debt, though he did not go into specifics. He also said he was focused on expanding early childhood education in the state, further reforming the criminal justice system and “expanding opportunities for working families to get ahead.”

“I’ve talked a lot about lowering the cost of health care, lowering the cost of child care, lowering the cost of education so that we can raise the standards of living for people who are working in our state in addition to creating jobs for competition for labor so that we’re lifting up their wages while we’re lowering their day-to-day costs,” he said.

Some observers said the federal probes into ComEd’s lobbying practices and their connections to Madigan’s office have hampered another of Pritzker’s campaign promises — addressing climate change by putting Illinois on a path to 100 percent carbon-free energy use.

“It’s on life support right now,” House Republican Leader Durkin said of energy reforms. “And until we get a full understanding of what is going to happen with the investigations that are currently related to ComEd, and also members of the Legislature, I don’t see any desire for the Legislature to take up that particular piece of legislation”

But Harris said the Clean Energy Jobs Act will be on the top of the agenda for House Democrats, despite the ComEd investigation having “some effect” on its prospects.

“But you know, there are a lot of different players involved in the whole energy discussion,” he said. “You have the different solar providers, you have wind providers you have downstate fossil fuel providers who are trying to get things. You have Exelon, which is a nuclear generator which has some specific asks. So, yeah, there’s a lot of moving pieces, but from what I hear from people who are involved in those negotiations, ... they seem to be moving along.”

The governor also said he would renew a legislative push to make a Chicago casino more feasible, as the \$45 billion capital plan depends, in part, on revenues from such a facility.

Harris said much of the focus in 2020 will also be on making sure some of the newly

created programs in 2019 can be successfully implemented.

Durkin said House Republicans plan to focus heavily next year on two issues: ethics reform and overhauling the way the General Assembly redraws legislative and congressional districts each year — a proposal they refer to as “fair maps”

Durkin said the mapmaking issue should be brought to voters in the form of a constitutional amendment ballot question.

“That is whether or not they should take the legislative map-drawing for the Legislature and Congress out of the hands of the Democrat power brokers in Springfield and leave it to an independent commission. ... That is the one way in which you can clean and get rid of the culture of Springfield,” he said.

Brady, the Senate Republican Leader, echoed that sentiment, pointing to a Pritzker campaign promise to veto partisan legislative maps.

“I could only take Gov. Pritzker at his word that he will not sign a gerrymandered, unfair map,” he said. “I think he knows the best way to get there is to remove the opportunity that two people have, the president of Senate and the speaker the House, to draw the map.”

He also said he is looking forward to hearing recommendations from a property tax reform task force that was established last year so the General Assembly can get to work on the issue.

While it is still unclear who will lead the Senate in 2020, Majority Leader Lightford, who is running among her caucus for the office of president, said a focus will be “working on business development and business growth, and attracting more jobs” to Illinois, as well as retaining high school graduates.

**Capitol Briefs: State to Receive \$40.2 Million in Early Childhood Development Grants**

by Peter Hancock Capitol News Illinois  
Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker’s office announced Monday that the state will receive \$40.2 million in federal grants over the next three years to improve early childhood programs.

The competitive grants are administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and they require a 30-percent cost-sharing commitment from non-federal funds. The grants are used to build early childhood program infrastructure and expand high-quality preschool programs in targeted communities, the governor’s office said in a news release.

“From our aggressive efforts to secure federal funding to our historic investments in early childhood programs and facilities, Illinois will become the best state in the nation for families raising young children,” Pritzker said in the release.

Last week, Pritzker announced that the state is increasing child care provider reimbursement rates by 5 percent statewide and by 20 percent for providers in what the Illinois Department of Human Services calls “Group 2” counties, which are primarily rural counties.

The budget that lawmakers passed during the 2019 session included a \$50 million increase in the state’s Early Childhood Education Block grant. In addition, the capital improvements program known as “Rebuild Illinois” provides \$100 million for construction of early childhood facilities across the state.

**Raoul calls proposed federal rules ‘attack on LGBTQ individuals’**

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul has joined with 18 other state attorneys general in opposing proposed new federal rules that they say could strip many LGBT individuals of many health care rights.

The proposed rule deals with non-discrimination policies within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It would delete current language in HHS regulations, adopted in the final weeks of the Obama administration, that prohibits discrimination in the agency’s programs “based on non-merit factors such as age, disability, sex, race, color, national origin, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation.”

That rule was based, in part, on the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized same-sex

*Continued on Page 8*



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For information, The sales clerk, SHAPIRO KREISMAN & ASSOCIATES, LLC Plaintiff's Attorneys, 2121 WAUKEGAN RD., SUITE 301, Bannockburn, IL, 60015 (847) 291-1717 For information call between the hours of 1pm - 3pm.. Please refer to file number 19-091235.

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Case Number: 19 CH 100  
TJSC#: 39-7881

NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

Published in *The Boone County Journal* Dec 20, 27 Jan 3

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

BANK OF AMERICA, N.A., Plaintiff,  
-v- 18 CH 57  
JOSEPH M. KRIEGL, LISA J. KRIEGL, Defendant  
NOTICE OF SALE

PUBLIC NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale entered in the above cause on November 20, 2018, an agent for The Judicial Sales Corporation, will at 1:00 PM on January 16, 2020, at the NLT Title L.L.C, 530 S. State, Suite 201 (Logan Avenue entrance), Belvidere, IL, 61008, sell at a public sale to the highest bidder, as set forth below, the following described real estate:

BEGINNING AT AN IRON STAKE IN THE SOUTHWESTERLY CORNER OF LOT THREE (3) IN BLOCK FIVE (5) OF ISAAC MILLER'S ADDITION TO BELVIDERE; THENCE NORTHEASTERLY ALONG THE NORTHERLY LINE OF BOONE STREET, NINETY (90) FEET TO AN IRON STAKE; THENCE NORTHWESTERLY AT A RIGHT ANGLE WITH SAID STREET LINE, ONE HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT AND FORTY-FIVE HUNDREDTHS (148.45) FEET TO AN IRON STAKE; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY, PARALLEL WITH SAID STREET LINE, NINETY (90) FEET TO AN IRON STAKE; THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY, ONE HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT AND FORTY-FIVE HUNDREDTHS (148.45) FEET TO THE PLACE OF BEGINNING. THE ABOVE DESCRIBED PREMISES INCLUDED A PART OF BLOCK 71 OF THE ORIGINAL TOWN OF BELVIDERE, SITUATED IN THE NORTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 26, TOWNSHIP 44 NORTH, RANGE 3 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, AND PARTS OF LOTS 2 AND 3 IN BLOCK 5 OF ISAAC MILLER'S ADDITION TO BELVIDERE, SITUATED IN THE SOUTHEAST QUARTER OF SECTION 26; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.

Commonly known as 337 WEST BOONE STREET, BELVIDERE, IL 61008

Property Index No. 05-26-401-008  
The real estate is improved with a single family residence.  
The judgment amount was \$142,675.98.

Sale terms: 25% down of the highest bid by certified funds at the close of the sale payable to The Judicial Sales Corporation. No third party checks will be accepted. The balance, including the Judicial Sale fee for the Abandoned Residential Property Municipality Relief Fund, which is calculated on residential real estate at the rate of \$1 for each \$1,000 or fraction thereof of the amount paid by the purchaser not to exceed \$300, in certified funds/or wire transfer, is due within twenty-four (24) hours. No fee shall be paid by the mortgagee acquiring the residential real estate pursuant to its credit bid at the sale or by any mortgagee, judgment creditor, or other lienor acquiring the residential real estate whose rights in and to the residential real estate arose prior to the sale. The subject property is subject to general real estate taxes, special assessments, or special taxes levied against said real estate and is offered for sale without any representation as to quality or quantity of title and without recourse to Plaintiff and in "AS IS" condition. The sale is further subject to confirmation by the court.

Upon payment in full of the amount bid, the purchaser will receive a Certificate of Sale that will entitle the purchaser to a deed to the real estate after confirmation of the sale.

The property will NOT be open for inspection and plaintiff makes no representation as to the condition of the property. Prospective bidders are admonished to check the court file to verify all information.

If this property is a condominium unit, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale, other than a mortgagee, shall pay the assessments and the legal fees required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/9(g)(1) and (g)(4). If this property is a condominium unit which is part of a common interest community, the purchaser of the unit at the foreclosure sale other than a mortgagee shall pay the assessments required by The Condominium Property Act, 765 ILCS 605/18.5(g-1).

IF YOU ARE THE MORTGAGOR (HOMEOWNER), YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN IN POSSESSION FOR 30 DAYS AFTER ENTRY OF AN ORDER OF POSSESSION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 15-1701(C) OF THE ILLINOIS MORTGAGE FORECLOSURE LAW.

You will need a photo identification issued by a government agency (driver's license, passport, etc.) in order to gain entry into our building and the foreclosure sale room in Cook County and the same identification for sales held at other county venues where The Judicial Sales Corporation conducts foreclosure sales.

For information, The sales clerk, SHAPIRO KREISMAN & ASSOCIATES, LLC Plaintiff's Attorneys, 2121 WAUKEGAN RD., SUITE 301, Bannockburn, IL, 60015 (847) 291-1717 For information call between the hours of 1pm - 3pm.. Please refer to file number 18-086575.

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You can also visit The Judicial Sales Corporation at www.tjsc.com for a 7 day status report of pending sales.

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Attorney File No. 18-086575  
Case Number: 18 CH 57  
TJSC#: 39-7879

NOTE: Pursuant to the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, you are advised that Plaintiff's attorney is deemed to be a debt collector attempting to collect a debt and any information obtained will be used for that purpose.

Published in *The Boone County Journal* Dec 20, 27 Jan 3

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COUNTY OF BOONE, STATE OF ILLINOIS

AMERIHOM MORTGAGE COMPANY, LLC, Plaintiff(s),  
vs. 19 CH 137  
LYRISSA CEDILLO, MARIO J. CEDILLO, UNKNOWN OWNERS AND NON-RECORD CLAIMANTS, Defendant(s).

PUBLICATION NOTICE

The requisite Affidavit for Publication having been filed, notice is hereby given to you: MARIO J. CEDILLO, NONRECORD CLAIMANTS, UNKNOWN TENANTS AND UNKNOWN OWNERS, Defendants in the above entitled suit, that said suit has been commenced in the Circuit Court of Boone County, Chancery Division, by the said Plaintiff, against you and other Defendants, praying for foreclosure of a certain Real Estate Mortgage conveying the premises described as follows, to wit:

LOT EIGHT (8) AS DESIGNATED UPON PLAT NO. 1 OF WYCLIFFE, BEING A SUBDIVISION OF PART OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER

(1/4) OF SECTION 30, TOWNSHIP 44 NORTH, RANGE 4 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, BELVIDERE, ILLINOIS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN PLAT INDEX FILE ENVELOPE 145-A, AS DOCUMENT NO. 94-9022, IN THE RECORDER'S OFFICE OF BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS; SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF BOONE AND THE STATE OF ILLINOIS.

Tax Number: 06-30-352-002

commonly known as 521 CALGARY WAY BELVIDERE IL 61008; and which said Real Estate Mortgage was made by LYRISSA CEDILLO AND MARIO J. CEDILLO, and recorded in the Office of the Boone County Recorder as Document Number 2017R02608; that Summons was duly issued out of the said Court against you as provided by law, and that the said suit is now pending.

Now, therefore, unless you, the said named Defendant, file your answer to the Complaint in the said suit or otherwise make your appearance therein, in the office of the Circuit Court of Boone County, located at 601 N MAIN ST, BELVIDERE, IL 61008, on or before January 21, 2020, default may be entered against you at any time after that day and a judgment entered in accordance with the prayer of said Complaint.

LAW OFFICES OF IRA T. NEVEL, LLC  
Attorney for Plaintiff  
Ira T. Nevel - ARDC #6185808  
Timothy R. Yueill - ARDC #6192172  
Greg Elsnic - ARDC #6242847  
Aaron Nevel - ARDC #6322724  
Joseph Baldwin - ARDC #6323598  
Danielle Alvarez - ARDC #6325510  
175 North Franklin St. Suite 201  
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# 19-04895  
13140571  
Published in *The Boone County Journal* Dec 20, 27 Jan 3

LEGAL NOTICES  
Public Notices

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

PUBLICATION NOTICE No. 17-JA-04

In The Interest of: Logan Gorzela, Minor

To: Gary Gorzela/ To whom it may concern Respondent

ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Take notice that on February 23, 2017, a petition was filed under the JUVENILE COURT ACT by Atty. Tricia Smith, State's Attorney, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, in the Circuit Court of Boone County entitled " In the Interest of Logan Gorzela, minor; and that in the County Courthouse in Belvidere, Illinois, at 1:30 P.M. central Daylight time on 01-30-20; or as soon thereafter as this cause may be heard, an adjudicatory hearing will be held upon the petition to have the child declared to be a ward of the Court under that Act. THE COURT HAS AUTHORITY IN THIS PROCEEDING TO TAKE FROM YOU THE CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP OF THE MINOR, TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS, AND TO APPOINT A GUARDIAN WITH POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION. YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD. IF THE PETITION REQUESTS THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN WITH THE POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO THE CHILD. Unless you appear you will not be entitled to further written notices or publication notices of the proceedings in this case, including the filing of an amended petition or a motion to terminate parental rights.

Now, unless you appear at the hearing and show cause against the petition, the allegations of the petition may stand admitted as against you and each of you, and an order of judgment entered.

Dated December 11, 2019  
Linda J. Anderson, Circuit Clerk  
By: Heather Austin Deputy Clerk  
Published in *The Boone County Journal* 12/20,27 01/03-c

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

PUBLICATION NOTICE No. 19-JA-26

In The Interest of: Javier Martinez, Minor

To: Logan Wentz/ To whom it may concern Respondent

ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Take notice that on November 18, 2019 a petition was filed under the JUVENILE COURT ACT by Atty. Tricia Smith, State's Attorney, 601 North Main Street, Belvidere, Illinois 61008, in the Circuit Court of Boone County entitled " In the Interest of Javier Martinez, minor; and that in the County Courthouse in Belvidere, Illinois, at 1:30 P.M. central Daylight time on 01-16-20 & 02-20-20; or as soon thereafter as this cause may be heard, an adjudicatory hearing will be held upon the petition to have the child declared to be a ward of the Court under that Act. THE COURT HAS AUTHORITY IN THIS PROCEEDING TO TAKE FROM YOU THE CUSTODY AND GUARDIANSHIP OF THE MINOR, TO TERMINATE YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS, AND TO APPOINT A GUARDIAN WITH POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION. YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO YOUR CHILD. IF THE PETITION REQUESTS THE TERMINATION OF YOUR PARENTAL RIGHTS AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A GUARDIAN WITH THE POWER TO CONSENT TO ADOPTION YOU MAY LOSE ALL PARENTAL RIGHTS TO THE CHILD. Unless you appear you will not be entitled to further written notices or publication notices of the proceedings in this case, including the filing of an amended petition or a motion to terminate parental rights.

Now, unless you appear at the hearing and show cause against the petition, the allegations of the petition may stand admitted as against you and each of you, and an order of judgment entered.

Dated December 11, 2019  
Linda J. Anderson, Circuit Clerk  
By: Heather Austin Deputy Clerk  
Published in *The Boone County Journal* 12/20,27 01/03-c

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY

Irasema Barraza, Plaintiff  
Vs Case No. 2019-D-75

Pablo Barraza, Defendant  
NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

Notice is given you, Pablo Barraza, Defendant that this cause has been commenced against you in this Court asking for Dissolution of Marriage and other relief.

Unless you file your response or otherwise file your appearance in this cause in the office of the Circuit Clerk of Boone County, Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, Illinois, 61008 on or before the 22nd day of January, 2020, a Judgment or other relief as

prayed for by the Plaintiff may be granted.

Dated: 12/17/19  
Linda J. Anderson  
Clerk of the Circuit Court  
17th Judicial Circuit  
Boone County, Illinois  
Published in the Boone County Journal 12/20,27 01/03

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY

Carrie Belvedere, Plaintiff  
Vs Case No. 2019-D-104  
John Belvedere, Defendant

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

Notice is given you, John Belvedere, Defendant that this cause has been commenced against you in this Court asking for Divorce and other relief.

Unless you file your response or otherwise file your appearance in this cause in the office of the Circuit Clerk of Boone County, Boone County Courthouse, 601 N. Main St., Belvidere, Illinois, 61008 on or before the 22nd day of January, 2020, a Judgment or other relief as prayed for by the Plaintiff may be granted.

Dated: 12/11/19  
Linda J. Anderson  
Clerk of the Circuit Court  
17th Judicial Circuit  
Boone County, Illinois  
Published in the Boone County Journal 12/13,20,27-c.

PUBLIC NOTICE  
IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 17TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BOONE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

In re the Marriage of Maria Villegas Casas and Martin Pinedo Belmontes Case No: 2019 D 102

NOTICE OF FILING OF PETITION FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE

YOU, Martin Pinedo Belmontes, ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that this case has been commenced in this Court and is pending against you asking for a dissolution of marriage and other relief. Unless you file your Answer or Appearance in this case in the office of the Clerk of the 17th Judicial Circuit, Boone County, Illinois located at 601 North Main Street in Belvidere, Illinois before January 22, 2020 or otherwise appear at the status hearing in this matter on January 22, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. in Courtroom 4 of the Boone County Courthouse, located at 601 North Main Street in Belvidere, Illinois, A JUDGMENT BY DEFAULT MAY BE TAKEN AGAINST YOU FOR THE RELIEF ASKED IN THIS COMPLAINT. Prepared by: Alexis Simmons, The Law Offices of Alexis M.K. Simmons, LLC, 124 N Water St, Ste 204, Rockford, IL 61107, (815) 570-9662, alexis@simmonsllaw.org.

Published in *The Boone County Journal* Dec 6, 13, 20, 2019

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING  
BELVIDERE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given that the City of Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 6:00 pm in the City Council Chamber, Belvidere City Hall, 401 Whitney Boulevard, Belvidere, Illinois 61008 upon the following:

Application of The City of Belvidere, 401 Whitney Boulevard, Belvidere, IL 61008 for a text amendment to the City of Belvidere Zoning Ordinance (Chapter 150 as amended) pertaining to Section 150.013 Definitions, Sections 150.105(C)(4)-150.105(C)(9) Planned Business, General Business, Central Business, Planned Industrial, General Industrial and Heavy Industrial Districts land uses, Section 150.204(D) Commercial Land Uses and Appendix C: Land Use Summary Chart and Section 150.902 Amendment of Zoning Regulations (Text Amendments). Specifically, the amendments are in regards to Adult-use Cannabis dispensaries and cultivation centers. The proposed text amendments are available for review at the Belvidere Community Development Department Office, 401 Whitney Boulevard during regular business hours.

Application Gunsteen Car Wash c/o Daniel Gunsteen, 651 S. Sutton Road, Ste 305, Streamwood, IL 60107 on behalf of the property owner, Robert L. Dixon Trust- 2001, 1348 Fairgrounds Road, Belvidere, IL 61008 for a special use to permit in-vehicle sales or service. Specifically, a car wash with accessory retail sales at 1125 N. State Street, Belvidere, IL 61008 (Belvidere Zoning Ordinance Sections 150.105(C)(5)(B)(2) In-vehicle sales or service and 150.904 Special use Review and Approval Procedures) in the GB, General Business District on approximately 1.2 acres. The property is legally described as:

Lot Two (2) as designated upon the Plat of Dixon Commercial Subdivision, being a Subdivision of part of Section 26 Township 44 North, Range 3 East of the Third Principal Meridian, according to the Plat thereof recorded June 15, 2017 as Document No. 2017RO3026 in the Recorder's Office of Boone County, Illinois; situated in the County of Boone and the State of Illinois. (PIN: 05-26-127-011)

All persons interested in the petitions may attend and be heard at the stated time and place.

Daniel Arevalo, Chairman,  
Belvidere Planning and Zoning Commission  
Published in *The Boone County Journal* December 27, 2019



**Brief**

*Continued from page 5*

marriage nationwide. The proposed new rule would replace that language with a generic ban on discrimination “to the extent doing so is prohibited by federal statute.”

The proposed change was published in the Federal Register Nov. 19. In that notice, the agency cited concerns that the Obama-era rule violates the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, which prohibits the federal government “from substantially burdening a person’s exercise of religion.” That law, however, also allows exceptions when there is a “compelling state interest” in doing so and the burden is the “least restrictive means of furthering that interest.”

In a letter to HHS dated Dec. 19, the deadline for public comment on the rule, the 19 attorneys general challenged that assertion.

“Our federal tax dollars should not be funneled towards organizations that openly discriminate against certain groups,” Raoul said in a separate statement. “I am committed to ensuring that all Americans are protected against discrimination and have an equal opportunity to apply for and

take advantage of programs funded through federal grants.”

All cultivation centers approved to grow adult-use recreational marijuana

With less than two weeks before adult-use recreational marijuana becomes legal in Illinois, the state Department of Agriculture announced Monday that all 21 cultivation centers that have been licensed to grow medical marijuana are now licensed also to grow for adult use.

The final three companies to be approved were Bedford Grow LLC, in Bedford Park; IL Grow Medicine LLC in Elk Grove Village; and JG IL LLC in Edgewood.

Under the marijuana legalization law passed during the 2019 legislative session, cultivation centers already licensed to grow medical marijuana were allowed to apply for early approval of licenses to grow for adult use.

Other applicants will have an opportunity to apply for licenses in an upcoming phase of the implementation process, with priority going to “social equity applicants” – generally, applicants from communities “disproportionately impacted” by the war on drugs,

or individuals with previous arrests or convictions for minor marijuana violations.

In addition to the three companies whose approvals were announced Monday, the department said in a news release that the other 18 cultivation centers include:

- Ataraxia - Albion
- Compass Ventures, Inc. - Litchfield
- Cresco Labs, LLC - Joliet
- Cresco Labs, LLC - Kankakee
- Cresco Labs, LLC - Lincoln
- Curative Health Cultivation, LLC - Aurora
- GTI Oglesby, LLC - Oglesby
- GTI Rock Island, LLC - Rock Island
- IESO, LLC - Carbondale
- InGown Farms - Freeport
- Nature’s Grace and Wellness, LLC - Vermont
- PharmaCann, LLC - Dwight
- PharmaCann, LLC - Hillcrest
- Progressive Treatment Solutions - East St. Louis
- Revolution Cannabis, LLC (DBA Ascend Illinois) - Barry
- Revolution Cannabis, LLC – Delavan
- Shelby County Community Service s- Shelbyville
- Wellness Group Pharms, LLC - Anna

**Season's Greetings**

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