FIGHTING FOR ILLINOIS

THE DAY ONE AGENDA

OVERVIEW

On January 3, 2027, the 120th United States Congress will face a choice: maintain the status quo or deliver real change with urgency and conviction.

Washington can continue down the Trump Administration's current path – where working families are ignored in favor of corporate and special interests, voting rights and civil rights are violated, and everyday costs are skyrocketing. Or the newly-elected Congress can lead with the purpose and action this moment demands. This means advancing a bold agenda that addresses the real challenges of everyday people, puts higher wages and affordable healthcare front and center, and lowers costs so American families can enjoy the life they've worked hard to build.

For the past two years, the Trump Administration has collaborated with Republicans in Congress to dismantle the essential programs that millions of people rely on to not only make ends meet but also to succeed.

The State of Illinois has seen it all firsthand because our state agencies are responsible for implementing a range of federal programs and services that support our residents. From denying SNAP benefits that help keep families and children fed, to eliminating Medicaid coverage for the most vulnerable, our residents have felt the consequences of Republican policies. Meanwhile, we've witnessed our farmers and agricultural sector reel from crushing tariffs and rising costs due to Trump's war in Iran and the impact of that at the gas pump and in the grocery stores.

For the past two years, the Pritzker Administration has been documenting the most harmful impacts of the Trump Administration and a Congress that has let a reckless executive go unchecked. Over the summer, Governor Pritzker directed his Deputy Governors and state agencies to analyze the most harmful and irresponsible federal decisions, funding cuts, and programmatic changes impacting how state government serves its residents. He then directed them to identify immediate actions the 120th U.S. Congress can take to help Illinoisans recover from the destruction brought on them by the Trump Administration and to build a stronger, more secure future for families across the state.

The Deputy Governors overseeing state agencies led the reviews across their respective four key policy portfolios:

1. Health and Human Services (Deputy Governor Grace Hou)
2. Education (Deputy Governor Martin Torres)
3. Budget & Economy (Deputy Governor Andy Manar)

4. Public Safety, Environment, Energy, and Infrastructure (Deputy Governor Bria Scudder)

State agencies worked with the Deputy Governors to create recommend and request actions from federal leadership, including:

1. **Executive Actions:** Steps the federal administration should take or actions they should reverse.
2. **Legislative Actions:** Policy proposals and fixes for Congress to pass.
3. **Program Funding:** Grants and programs that need funding restored or increased rather than funding the ongoing war in Iran.

In addition to these policy priorities, Governor Pritzker also renews his calls on Congress to raise the federal minimum wage, pass measures to provide universal healthcare and childcare, secure the border and pass comprehensive immigration reform, implement AI guardrails, and codify abortion rights into law.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

A. EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

Federal Agency Capacity

- **Restore staffing at U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies to pre-reduction-in-force levels**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Reduced capacity at federal agencies flows downstream to Illinois, its sub-grantees, and the public, who cannot access services in a timely way.
    - **Issue:** The Trump Administration issued Executive Order 14222 to implement the "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE) initiative, resulting in reductions in force that have gutted federal agencies that states depend on. More than 22,000 workers, or about 24% of HHS' workforce, have left or been pushed out since January 2025. Although federal officials have stated that the HHS overhaul will not affect services, the magnitude of staffing and systems cuts makes service disruptions inevitable, particularly in areas like disease response, food and drug safety, and support for Medicaid and Medicare. These reductions will impede the department's ability to meet basic public health responsibilities at a time when communities face rising outbreaks and increasing need. Agencies are frequently unable to complete core functions: distributing funding on time, issuing sub-regulatory guidance and technical assistance, conducting site inspections, processing applications, and reviewing required reports. USDA regional capacity, technical assistance, and administrative support for nutrition programs have been cut.
    - **Action requested:** Restore workforce size and experience levels to pre-RIF levels at the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Social Security Administration (SSA). At USDA specifically, restore regional capacity, technical assistance, and administrative support for SNAP, WIC, and other nutrition programs, and expand opportunities for program modernization and innovation.
- **Halt the reorganization of HHS and reopen Illinois-based offices**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Reduction and reorganization of HHS regional operations led to the closure of the Office of the General Counsel and the Region V Head Start and Child Care Regional Office.
    - **Issue:** The department's regional offices have been significantly reduced, weakening a key source of federal support and local partnership. These offices traditionally connected federal resources to Illinois communities and helped build relationships among health departments, academic institutions, and

community-based organizations. Their reduction limits communication and undermines efforts to rebuild trust in public health at the local level.

- **Action requested:** Halt the reorganization of HHS and reopen Illinois-based offices.

- **Restore research funding to critical health and human services areas**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** The Trump Administration has cut approximately $100 million in funding that supports Illinois public health and human services activities, including HIV prevention and surveillance, chronic disease monitoring, public health workforce development, and local health department capacity. These reductions affect the state's ability to identify emerging health threats, target resources effectively, and deliver evidence-based services to Illinois residents.
  - **Issue**: The Trump Administration has cut or frozen an estimated $175 billion in federal grants across the United States since the start of Donald Trump's second term. These reductions weaken the evidence base that informs policy and program decisions, disrupt ongoing research and surveillance efforts, and limit the ability of states and community organizations to respond to evolving health and human service needs.
  - **Action requested**: Restore and protect federal research and public health funding for critical health and human services programs, including disease surveillance, HIV prevention, chronic disease research, behavioral health, and community-based public health initiatives.

Human Services, Disability, and Civil Rights

- **Reverse executive orders that restrict evidence-based human services**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Trump Administration executive orders restricting evidence-based human services and affect behavioral health services; gender identity, transgender, and LGBTQIA+ supports; diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice work; immigrant and refugee supports; homelessness response; the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and *Olmstead* protections; and other human service systems serving thousands of Illinoisans, while creating operational and fiscal pressure through conflicting federal requirements.
  - **Issue:** A series of Trump Administration executive orders and administrative actions restrict states' ability to deliver services consistent with evidence-based practice and state law, including orders targeting:
    - Harm reduction (Executive Orders 14321 and 14379);
    - Protections for transgender and LGBTQIA+ individuals (Executive Orders 14168 and 14201, and the rescission of Executive Order 14075);
    - Public health (Executive Order 14212);

        - Vaccine mandates (Executive Order 14407);
        - Diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice (Executive Orders 14151, 14173, and 14398);
        - Due process protections for immigrants and noncitizens (Executive Order 14159); and
        - Housing First and community (rather than institutional) living (Executive Order 14321).
    - **Action Requested:** Rescind these executive orders and related administrative actions so that federal policy supports — rather than restricts — state innovation and proven practices.

- **Reengage with the World Health Organization and strengthen collaboration with other international public health organizations**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois benefits from timely access to global disease surveillance, public health guidance, and international coordination on infectious diseases, vaccine development, and outbreak response. Strong federal engagement with international public health partners helps protect Illinois residents from emerging health threats and supports confidence in vaccination programs and other public health interventions.
    - **Issue:** Reduced U.S. engagement with the World Health Organization and other international public health organizations limits access to global surveillance data, scientific expertise, and coordinated responses to infectious disease threats. It can also weaken international collaboration on vaccine research, safety monitoring, and distribution, reducing preparedness for future public health emergencies.
    - **Action Requested:** Restore active U.S. participation in the World Health Organization and other international public health organizations to strengthen global disease surveillance, vaccine coordination, emergency preparedness, and public health response efforts.

- **Strike the June 18, 2026 Department of Justice (DOJ) memorandum on *Olmstead*, preserve the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule, and strengthen Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 enforcement**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Federal *Olmstead* and HCBS protections support approximately 25,000 Illinoisans receiving HCBS waiver services and strengthen opportunities for thousands more people with disabilities to live, work, and participate in their communities. Without those protections, people with disabilities face unnecessary, costly, and often personally harmful institutionalization.
    - **Issue:** Recent Department of Justice guidance — including a June 18, 2026 memorandum — casts doubt on the federal executive branch's commitment to the *Olmstead* mandate: the right of people with disabilities to live in the least restrictive, community-based setting. The lack of clarity about federal intent

invites misinterpretation and costly relitigation of the standards states use to support people with disabilities.

- **Action Requested:** Strike or supersede the June 18, 2026 DOJ memorandum; reaffirm *Olmstead* and the ADA; preserve the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule; strengthen enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504; and expand federal support for community-based services and transitions out of institutional care.

Housing and Homelessness

- **Restore federal support for Housing First, Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Re-Housing, and Continuum of Care (CoC); withdraw the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s public housing work-requirement rule**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois receives more than $200 million a year in federal Continuum of Care funding. According to an analysis by the National Alliance to End Homelessness, HUD's FY 2026 CoC policy changes could put more than 5,100 Illinois residents at risk of losing their housing and jeopardize more than $60 million in existing federal funding, undermining the State's $539 million SFY 2027 investment in Home Illinois.
  - **Issue:** Executive Order 14321 and HUD's FY 2026 Continuum of Care Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) shift federal funding away from Housing First, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Rapid Re-Housing. Although the NOFO remains subject to litigation, HUD has resumed the funding competition, threatening existing housing assistance and creating uncertainty for providers. Separately, a HUD proposed rule (91 FR 10016) would permit work requirements and time limits across public housing and federal rental assistance programs.
  - **Action Requested:** Preserve and fully fund CoC programs, including Housing First, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Rapid Re-Housing; reject the Trump Administration's FY 2027 proposal to eliminate the CoC program and consolidate homelessness assistance funding onto the Emergency Solutions Grants program; prohibit federal funding conditions that undermine proven approaches to ending homelessness; protect renewal funding and prevent disruptions to existing housing assistance; supersede Executive Order 14321 and the FY 2026 CoC NOFO; and block implementation of HUD's proposed work requirements and time limits.
- **Reinstate Federal Financing Bank (FFB) financing for HUD's FHA–HFA Risk Sharing program**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Over the last four years, the FFB Risk Sharing program enabled more than $66 million in multifamily mortgages, financing the creation or preservation of 1,212 affordable units in Illinois. Construction costs in Illinois have risen 30%, making low-cost financing more important, not less.

- **Issue:** In December 2025 the Trump Administration "paused" Federal Financing Bank (FFB) financing of HUD FHA–HFA Risk Sharing program loans, limiting the creation of affordable housing at a time of high demand.
- **Action requested:** Reinstate FFB financing of Risk Sharing program loans.

- **Reverse HUD's action excluding mixed-immigration-status families from assisted housing**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** If finalized and implemented, HUD's mixed-status policy would cause nearly 80,000 families nationally to lose housing assistance, including nearly 37,000 children.
  - **Issue:** A Trump Administration action published February 20, 2026 would separate families with mixed immigration statuses and require burdensome immigration verification for everyone — including U.S. citizens, of every age — living in HUD-assisted housing.
  - **Action Requested:** Reverse the action.

Immigration

- **Halt indiscriminate and outsized immigration round-ups and the mass deportation agenda, strengthen oversight, pursue accountability, and advance common sense immigration reform**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Since the Trump Administration began, over 8,000 individuals have been arrested in Illinois – this includes individuals like Ruben Torres Maldonado, who was caring for his 16-year-old daughter battling cancer, or Jose Fiscal Belli, a restaurant owner and father of four who coached little league in Paris, Illinois. Over 75% of those arrested had no criminal conviction. Almost 4,000 of these arrests occurred during Operation Midway Blitz – an occupation of the Chicagoland region**.** The Cline Center Firewatch Project revealed that federal agents used physical violence at least 410 times in Illinois between January 20,2025 and May 1, 2026, including 73 uses of chemical weapons. These acts of violence occurred all across the state but were concentrated in the Chicagoland area in fall of 2025. Additionally, UIC Great Cities Institute estimates that immigration enforcement during the first year of the Trump Administration's second term has led to over $1.26 billion in foregone retail and restaurant activity enforcement and approximately $107 million in foregone local sales-tax revenue.
  - **Issue:** The Trump Administration's actions to terrorize communities, round up and deport non-citizens, and limit access to fair immigration proceedings are inhumane and violate due process. Deportation — and fear of detention — is causing well documented fear, negative economic impact, and an erosion in government trust.
  - **Action Requested:** Immediately halt these actions. Pursue accountability and investigations by standing up a federal model similar to the Illinois Accountability

Commission (IAC). A federal accountability commission should prosecute the officers identified by the IAC and pursue investigations and justice for those individuals harmed by indiscriminate immigration enforcement actions. Also, enact enforcement reforms, such as: end roving patrols, arrest quotas, and other arrest incentives; strictly limit Customs and Border Patrol involvement in civil interior immigration enforcement; require ICE and CBP to obtain arrest warrants for civil enforcement; halt roving patrols; reinstate sensitive locations; require background checks for ICE and CBP officers; restart intensive trainings for ICE and CBP officers before working in communities; require the use of body worn cameras; ban paramilitary tactics and chemical weapons; dismantle surveillance databases; end 287(g) agreements nationwide.

- **Restore humanitarian protections and create pathways to citizenship for immigrant and refugee communities**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** An estimated 48% of immigrants – or over 900,000 individuals - in Illinois are naturalized US Citizens, with an additional estimated 268,000 eligible for naturalization. A pathway to citizenship can be life changing for an immigrant and their family – opening up access to authorized work, educational opportunities, and the full rights and protections afforded to citizens. However, there are a number of Illinoisans who either recently lost or hold temporary statuses that are at risk OR are longtime residents with no pathway to citizenship, for example:
        - An estimated 527,000 Illinoisans are undocumented
        - 63,200 are DACA eligible (28,420 active recipients)
        - In 2024, an estimated 49,000 Illinoisans were TPS holders, which has decreased since the Trump Administration did not renew Venezuelan TPS (est. 24,000 impacted Illinoisans)
    - **Issue:** Federal humanitarian protections and integration supports have been rolled back. In early 2025, an estimated 6.1 million individuals had temporary protections for humanitarian reasons (e.g. pending asylum cases, humanitarian parole, Deferred Action for Child Arrivals (DACA), TPS, U or T visa applications, or Special Immigrant Juvenile Status). By the end of last year, over half a million people had lost status, and analysis by FWD.us projects that by the end of 2026 an estimated 2.2 million people will have lost status and by the end of 2028, 3.5 million, or 57% of those protected in early 2025, will have lost protections.
    - **Action Requested:** Preserve and restore Temporary Protected Status (including consideration for Afghanistan, Cameroon, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Burma (Myanmar), Ethiopia, Haiti, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen); create a pathway to citizenship for DACA and long term undocumented residents; increase visa and green card caps; create a lawful pathway to citizenship FOR ALL; strengthen refugee resettlement and immigrant integration

programs; restore the 2022 Public Charge Rule; improve access to employment authorization; and maintain lawful humanitarian pathways.

- **Limit the expansion of status verification databases like SAVE and E-Verify**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois agencies generally do not use E-Verify, and that non-participation may jeopardize the State's participation in federal contracts. Additionally, while verification databases like SAVE are used in limited capacities, as required by federal law, their established protocol is to ensure that system flags are further investigated and account for potential system errors before denying access to benefits.
    - **Issue:** While E-Verify is intended to verify work authorization, its accuracy limitations and administrative requirements can create barriers for authorized workers and impose additional burdens on employers. Errors in the system may lead to delayed hiring, lost wages, and workforce shortages, particularly when E-Verify mandates are expanded without corresponding improvements to system accuracy and oversight. Additionally, attempts by the Trump Administration to expand the SAVE database into voter rolls represents a threat to eligible voters without improved system accuracy or ability to quickly reconcile flagged individuals who may be denied their right to vote.
    - **Action Requested:** Executive Order 13465 (June 6, 2008) and 48 C.F.R. 22.1800 et seq. require federal contractors to use the federal Employment Eligibility Verification System (E-Verify). Illinois agencies generally do not use E-Verify; Illinois may audit I-9 forms as an alternative. Amend the federal requirement to exempt states that have an alternative method of verifying employment eligibility.

B. LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Repeal H.R. 1's Cuts to Food Assistance and Health Coverage

- **Repeal H.R. 1's SNAP cost-shift to states and restore full federal funding of SNAP benefits and administration**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Repealing the SNAP cost-shift would protect food assistance for approximately 2 million Illinoisans and prevent up to $705 million a year in new state costs, preserving state resources for customer service, program integrity, and timely benefit delivery.
    - **Issue:** H.R. 1 requires states to pay a share of SNAP benefit costs based on their payment error rates — ending the long-standing partnership in which the federal government fully funds food benefits and states administer the program.
    - **Action Requested:** Repeal the error-rate-based state cost-share and restore full federal funding for SNAP benefits and program administration.
- **Repeal H.R. 1's SNAP eligibility restrictions and protect people with disabilities**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Nearly 450,000 Illinois SNAP participants are affected by H.R. 1's expanded work requirements and reporting obligations. In the first month

the changes took effect, more than 15,000 older Illinoisans lost SNAP benefits. Without federal support, Illinois bears more responsibility for covering the gap.

- **Issue:** H.R. 1 expanded the "able-bodied adults without dependents" (ABAWD) definition and work requirements, narrowed noncitizen eligibility, narrowed work-requirement waivers, and added administrative requirements that make it harder for eligible people to keep benefits. People with disabilities — especially those living in congregate settings where SNAP benefits are pooled to buy food — are particularly at risk.
- **Action Requested:** Repeal these SNAP eligibility restrictions. If full repeal is not possible, carve out by statute or rule persons with intellectual/developmental, physical, and other disabilities — particularly those receiving waiver services — and confirm continuing SNAP eligibility for people with disabilities.

- **Repeal H.R. 1's Medicaid burdensome work requirements for Affordable Care Act (ACA) expansion adults**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Repealing the work requirements would protect Medicaid coverage for 700,000 low-income Illinois adults. The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) projects tens of thousands of older Illinoisans will lose Medicaid coverage when work requirements take effect in 2027.
  - **Issue:** H.R. 1 requires ACA expansion adults to meet work ("community engagement") requirements beginning January 1, 2027. Work requirements have never before been imposed in Medicaid; they burden enrollees and the State alike and could cause large coverage losses, pushing Illinois back toward pre-ACA uninsurance rates.
  - **Action Requested:** Repeal the burdensome work requirements. If repeal is not possible, exempt people with disabilities, particularly those receiving waiver services.
- **Repeal H.R. 1's six-month Medicaid redeterminations**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** H.R. 1 doubles renewal frequency for 700,000 Illinoisans, creating excessive burden for enrollees and the State and increasing the likelihood of missed renewals and coverage losses.
  - **Issue:** Starting January 1, 2027, H.R. 1 requires ACA expansion adults to renew coverage every six months instead of every twelve.
  - **Action Requested:** Repeal the six-month redetermination requirement.
- **Reinstate Medicaid eligibility for lawfully present immigrants who lost coverage October 1, 2026**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Approximately 10,000 lawfully present Illinoisans lost coverage under H.R. 1, including a minimum of 2,000 older Illinoisans. Loss of Medicaid coverage risks negative health outcomes and financial hardship for

these residents and increases uncompensated care for emergency departments and other safety-net providers.

- **Issue:** H.R. 1 ended federal Medicaid eligibility for certain lawfully present immigrant groups, including vulnerable refugees and asylees, effective October 1, 2026. These individuals now have limited or no options for affordable coverage.
- **Action Requested:** Reinstate federal Medicaid eligibility for these populations.

- **Repeal or delay H.R. 1's limits on Medicaid provider taxes and state directed payments**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** H.R. 1's provider-tax changes are estimated to reduce federal Medicaid support in Illinois by approximately $2.8 billion a year by FY 2031. After full phase-in of the tax caps, the total annual impact on the Medicaid program will be $6.1 billion by FY 2033, of which $3.8 billion is lost federal support.
  - **Issue:** Nearly every state uses provider taxes to fund the state share of Medicaid, and state directed payments let states reimburse providers above base rates. H.R. 1 and subsequent rulemaking curtail both.
  - **Action Requested:** Repeal or delay the limitations on provider taxes and state directed payments.

Health Coverage and Public Health

- **Restore the Affordable Care Act (ACA) enhanced premium tax credits**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** More than 373,000 Illinoisans have Marketplace coverage through Get Covered Illinois, but enrollment is down nearly 15% from last year, and Marketplace premiums rose more than 25% for 2026 coverage. Restoring the enhanced premium tax credits would improve affordability and stabilize Illinois' individual market.
  - **Issue:** The American Rescue Plan Act increased the value of Marketplace premium tax credits and extended them to more people. At the start of 2026, the Republican-controlled Congress let the enhanced credits expire, causing premium spikes and restoring the income "cliff" for subsidies.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore the enhanced premium tax credits.
- **Protect Medicaid reimbursement for qualified reproductive health care providers**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Federal protection for qualified reproductive health providers preserves beneficiary choice and continued access to family planning, preventive, and other reproductive health services for Illinois Medicaid beneficiaries.
  - **Issue:** Discriminatory reimbursement restrictions threaten to exclude qualified reproductive health providers from Medicaid.

- **Action Requested:** Federally protect qualified reproductive health care providers from exclusion from Medicaid.

- **Restore reproductive health protections removed by *Dobbs* and protect interstate travel for care**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Women traveling to Illinois for health care may risk criminal penalties when they return to their home states.
  - **Issue:** *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* (2022) removed protections previously recognized under the 14th Amendment. Travel has become a major pathway for women seeking care, and travel bans or criminal prosecutions threaten access to care that is legal in Illinois.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore women's health protections in federal law.

- **Insulate federal scientific advisory committees from political interference**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois has had to create state-level independent commissions to replicate the work that federal advisory committees such as Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) traditionally did. The system works, but the state lacks the capacity to match the level of scientific analysis those bodies routinely performed.
  - **Issue:** Federal advisory committees such as ACIP issue binding guidance and have long served as a scientifically grounded benchmark for public health professionals and providers. Similar radical changes are rumored for the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) and the Advisory Committee on Childhood Vaccines, which could affect everything from insurance coverage of preventive screenings to access to federal vaccination dollars for vulnerable children.
  - **Action Requested:** Enact protections insulating federal scientific advisory committees from political interference.

- **End harmful and unfounded claims about autism**
  - **Overview in Illinois**: Illinois agencies and health providers rely on clear, evidence-based federal public health guidance, including on autism. Unfounded claims circulating at the federal level create confusion for families and undermine trust in state health messaging.
  - **Issue**: HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. directed the CDC to study factors that are contributing to the rise in autism diagnoses in the U.S. Although no new study results have been released, the White House disseminated public materials linking Tylenol use in pregnancy and childhood vaccines to autism, although there is no evidence of such a link.
  - **Action requested:** Direct HHS and CDC to base all public materials on established scientific consensus and to discontinue the dissemination of unsupported claims related to autism.

Disability, Long-Term Services, and Direct Care

- **Codify *Olmstead* protections in federal law**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Codifying *Olmstead* would end costly relitigation of the standards Illinois uses to support people with disabilities in living as they choose and protect self-determination and independence against unnecessary institutionalization.
    - **Issue:** Protections for community integration rest on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and *Olmstead*, and recent Department of Justice guidance has cast doubt on the executive branch's intent to enforce them.
    - **Action requested:** Establish a clear, explicit statutory mandate that states establish and operate a practice of prioritizing community integration consistent with the ADA.
- **Enact the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Access Act to make home- and community-based services a mandatory Medicaid benefit**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois administers nine Medicaid HCBS waivers, three of which serve people with developmental disabilities. Mandatory HCBS would give Illinois stronger federal support to build a more equitable, sustainable, community-centered long-term services system.
    - **Issue:** Federal Medicaid law requires states to cover institutional care but treats most home- and community-based services as optional — an institutional bias in federal law. People can qualify for institutional care while waiting years for equivalent support at home.
    - **Action requested:** Enact the Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Access Act, or similar legislation, to make HCBS mandatory, address waiting lists, establish service standards, strengthen the workforce and family supports, improve quality oversight, and provide enhanced federal funding. The HCBS Access Act was introduced in April 2026 and is cosponsored by Illinois Representative Jan Schakowsky.
- **Support family caregivers and respite care**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois families provide the vast majority of unpaid care for older adults and people with disabilities, helping loved ones remain safely at home and connected to their communities. Family caregivers provide millions of hours of unpaid care each year, representing billions of dollars in economic value.
    - **Issue:** Family caregivers face growing demands with limited access to respite, training, care coordination, navigation, and financial support. Without additional support, caregiver burnout can lead to avoidable institutionalization, workforce disruptions, financial hardship, and increased pressure on Medicaid and other

public programs. Illinois has expanded caregiver and respite initiatives, but federal support remains fragmented and insufficient relative to the scale of need.

  - **Action Requested:** Establish a permanent federal investment in family caregivers, including respite, training, care navigation, and financial supports, recognizing that unpaid family caregivers are essential to keeping people with disabilities and older adults safely in their homes and communities.

- **Expand work opportunities and incentives for people with disabilities**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois has invested in supported employment services for disabled workers, transition services, and programs to help people with disabilities enter and succeed in the workforce. The state is also advancing policies to ensure people with disabilities can earn competitive wages and build greater economic independence.
  - **Issue:** Too many people with disabilities still face barriers to employment, including inadequate access to Vocational Rehabilitation and supported employment, gaps in the transition from school to work, and outdated federal benefit rules that can penalize people for working, earning more, or accumulating modest savings. These policies can make employment financially risky rather than rewarding.
  - **Action Requested:** Modernize federal disability employment policy by strengthening Vocational Rehabilitation and supported employment, improving transition services for youth with disabilities, and eliminating outdated benefit cliffs—including SSI's $2,000 asset limit and rules that can cause people to risk essential benefits and health coverage as their earnings increase.
- **Phase out Section 14(c) subminimum wages nationally, with transition funding**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Under the Dignity in Pay Act, Illinois is implementing a five-year plan to end subminimum wage employment by December 31, 2029, directly supporting approximately 3,100 workers and 59 entities holding 14(c) certificates at the time the law was signed, and improving opportunity for hundreds of thousands of disabled people statewide. Federal funding would help expand customized and supported employment, benefits counseling, transportation, provider transformation, staff training, family education, data systems, and meaningful community services for people who choose not to work or need supports beyond employment.
  - **Issue:** Section 14(c) of federal law still allows certified employers to pay workers with disabilities less than minimum wage. Illinois is ending the practice; federal law has not changed.
  - **Action Requested:** Enact the bipartisan Transformation to Competitive Integrated Employment Act, or similar legislation, which would stop new certificates, phase out existing certificates over five years, authorize grants for state and provider transformation, create a national technical assistance center,

require outcome reporting, and increase supported employment funding for states that complete the transition.

- **Modernize Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Thousands of Illinois residents with developmental disabilities rely on SSI for housing, food, and transportation while maintaining Medicaid. Updated SSI rules would let them earn more, save for emergencies, and marry without risking benefits and coverage.
    - **Issue:** SSI asset limits have been frozen at $2,000 for an individual and $3,000 for a married couple since 1989. Outdated rules discourage work, penalize savings, create marriage penalties, and force people with disabilities to remain in poverty to keep essential supports.
    - **Action Requested:** Modernize SSI by increasing benefit levels, raising and indexing asset limits, eliminating marriage penalties, updating earned and unearned income rules, reducing penalties for in-kind support, and strengthening work incentives while preserving Medicaid access. The SSI Restoration Act is one model.
- **Make a permanent federal investment in the direct support workforce**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois relies on thousands of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs). Workforce shortages limit provider capacity, delay services, increase turnover, and push more responsibility onto unpaid family caregivers.
    - **Issue:** Chronic shortages of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) limit access to HCBS nationwide. Because Medicaid is jointly financed and reimbursement rates largely determine provider capacity, states cannot solve the shortage alone.
    - **Action Requested:** Establish a permanent federal investment through enhanced Medicaid funding, workforce development, and accountability measures that support competitive wages and benefits, training and credentialing, career advancement, and recruitment — with safeguards ensuring increased funding reaches the workforce.
- **Invest in accessible housing and transportation for people with disabilities**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Major IHDA investments have been made in Permanent Supportive Housing. The demand for improved housing and paratransit services are far greater than current federal resources available.
    - **Issue:** Too many people with disabilities remain unable to live independently or participate fully in their communities because accessible, affordable housing and reliable transportation are in short supply. Housing and transportation barriers can force people into more restrictive settings, limit access to employment and health care, and undermine efforts to transition people from institutions into community-based living.

- **Action Requested:** Expand federal investment in accessible, affordable housing and transportation so people with disabilities can flourish in their homes and communities. Pass the Visitable Inclusive Tax Credits for Accessible Living (VITAL) Act (S. 5285); the Eleanor Smith Inclusive Home Design Act (H.R. 9932); and the Same-Day Paratransit Innovation Act (H.R. 8128).

Aging and Older Adults

- **Reauthorize the Older Americans Act (OAA) and increase its funding**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** In FY 2026 Illinois received $60.2 million in federal OAA funding and Illinois added $87.9 million in State funds — meaning Illinois covered 68% of the cost of OAA programs. OAA programs serve more than 14 million older adults and caregivers nationwide, including more than 600,000 in Illinois.
  - **Issue:** The most recent OAA reauthorization expired in September 2024, and federal funding has been flat for at least a decade, failing to keep pace with a growing population of older adults with increasingly complex needs.
  - **Action Requested:** Reauthorize the OAA and increase federal funding for OAA services.
- **Strengthen long-term services and supports for older adults**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois has expanded home- and community-based services that allow older adults to receive care in their homes and communities, including in-home assistance, adult day services, and other supports that help people maintain independence. These services are critical to meeting the needs of a growing older population while reducing reliance on institutional care.
  - **Issue:** Demand for home- and community-based long-term services and supports continues to grow, but limited federal resources and workforce shortages constrain access and leave too many older adults waiting for services or entering nursing facilities when community-based care could better meet their needs. The cost of institutional care also places significant pressure on Medicaid and families.
  - **Action Requested:** Increase federal support for Medicaid and other home- and community-based long-term services and supports for older adults, including programs that help people safely transition from costly nursing facilities. Pass the HCBS Access Act (H.R. 8540/S. 5321).

Veterans

- **Invest in veterans' mental health and suicide prevention**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois has in part through the *Governor's Challenge to Prevent Suicide Among Veterans, Servicemembers, and their Families (SMVF)*, expanded efforts to connect veterans and their families with mental health services, crisis intervention, peer support, and suicide prevention resources

through the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs and community partners. Veterans in rural communities and those facing barriers to accessing care remain a particular focus.

- **Issue:** Veterans continue to experience elevated risks of suicide, depression, PTSD, substance use, and other behavioral health challenges. Too many veterans face gaps between crisis response and sustained mental health care, particularly when they lack transportation, stable housing, or access to specialized services.
- **Action Requested:** Increase federal investment in veteran mental health and suicide prevention, including community-based behavioral health services, peer support, crisis intervention, substance use treatment, and targeted outreach to veterans in rural and underserved communities. Pass the No Wrong Door for Veterans Act (H.R. 1969) and the Building Resources and Access for Veterans' mental Health Engagement Act (BRAVE Act) (S. 609/H.R. 6024) to strengthen community-based mental health and suicide prevention services and expand access to care.

- **End veterans' homelessness**
  - **Overview in Illinois**: Illinois connects veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness with housing, supportive services, employment assistance, and benefits through the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, local governments, and community organizations.
  - **Issue:** No veteran should experience homelessness after serving our country. Yet veterans can face a combination of housing costs, mental health and substance use challenges, disability, unemployment, and difficulty navigating available benefits and services. Rising housing costs and limited affordable housing can make it particularly difficult to prevent homelessness before a veteran reaches a crisis.
  - **Action requested:** Strengthen and expand federal investment in veteran homelessness prevention and permanent housing, including HUD-VASH and other supportive housing programs, rapid rehousing, rental assistance, case management, and wraparound services, with a goal of making veteran homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring. Pass the End Veteran Homelessness Act (H.R. 1957) and the Veterans Housing Opportunity Act (H.R. 10168).

- **Modernize the State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Veterans live longer in state-run veterans' long-term care facilities than in private skilled care. Expanding access in underserved areas — central Illinois, the Metro East, and northwestern Illinois — requires timely federal investment in new and upgraded facilities.
  - **Issue:** U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) rules require states to commit their full 35% match before a project can be placed on the federal priority list for the 65% federal share. More than 100 pending construction and renovation projects nationwide compete for limited annual appropriations, leaving approved state projects — and the state dollars committed to them — waiting years.

- **Action Requested:** Modernize the program so states are not required to tie up capital funds for years while awaiting federal appropriations.

- **Reverse durable medical equipment cost shift to state-operated veterans homes**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois operates state veterans homes that provide long-term care and support to veterans. Historically, veterans residing in these facilities received durable medical equipment (DME), such as wheelchairs, prosthetics, and other medically necessary equipment, directly through the federal VA.
  - **Issue**: The federal VA changed policy to require states to cover the costs of Durable Medical Equipment for residents at state operated veterans homes; shifting hundreds of thousands in costs and new paperwork requirements to state government. This change is one of a number of recent federal actions that have shifted costs from the VA to state-run veteran homes.
  - **Action Requested**: Restore the prior policy under which the VA directly provides durable medical equipment to eligible veterans residing in state operated veterans homes, and prevent future unfunded cost shifts to states.

Children and Families

- **Restore Title IV-E claiming eligibility for child welfare workforce training**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois has lost approximately $2.45 million in federal reimbursement a year (a reduction from $14.24 million to $11.79 million) — an estimated $12.27 million over the five-year Title IV-E Cost Allocation Plan — shifting the cost to State General Revenue Funds.
  - **Issue:** Current federal Title IV-E claiming restrictions require the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to exclude essential workforce training from federal reimbursement — including training in culturally responsive, trauma-informed, family-centered, and evidence-informed practice, and training that prepares staff to serve LGBTQIA+ children and youth and Black, Brown, Indigenous, and other historically underserved children and families.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore Title IV-E claiming eligibility for this training.

- **Update Title IV-E eligibility to reflect current poverty levels**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Updating Title IV-E eligibility would stop eligibility erosion and substantially increase federal reimbursement for children in Illinois' care.
  - **Issue:** Federal foster care reimbursement eligibility under the Social Security Act is pegged to 1996 standards, so fewer and fewer children below today's poverty line qualify ("eligibility erosion").
  - **Action Requested:** Update eligibility requirements to reflect current poverty thresholds and need.

- **Align state Child Abuse and Neglect Registry reporting across jurisdictions**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Hundreds of Illinoisans each year need Child Abuse and Neglect Registry checks in other states for employment or foster/relative placement. Inconsistent State processes consume substantial state staff time and delay background-check approvals for employment and foster and relative caregiver certification.
    - **Issue:** Every state has its own request process and forms for Child Abuse and Neglect Registry checks. Illinois applicants must undergo a check in every state where they have lived in the last five years.
    - **Action Requested:** Align state Child Abuse and Neglect Registry reporting across jurisdictions.
- **Strengthen kinship care and family preservation**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** DCFS has been commended for expanding efforts to keep children safely with relatives and strengthen families before crises lead to foster-care placement, including kinship navigation, family preservation services, and prevention programs. When children cannot safely remain with their parents, placement with relatives and other trusted adults can provide greater stability and continuity.
    - **Issue:** Children placed with relatives often face significant financial and logistical challenges, while families at risk of entering the child welfare system may lack timely access to behavioral health, substance use, housing, and other supports. Federal funding streams remain fragmented, and many kinship caregivers do not receive the same level of support available to traditional foster caregivers.
    - **Action Requested:** Increase and streamline federal investment in kinship care and family preservation, including financial assistance and navigation services for kinship caregivers, evidence-based prevention programs, and flexible supports that help families safely remain together and reduce unnecessary foster-care placements.
- **Support youth aging out of foster care**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois provides extended foster care and transition services to help young people prepare for adulthood, including housing, education, employment, health care, and life-skills supports. The state has also expanded efforts to ensure young people leaving care have meaningful connections to supportive adults and stable housing.
    - **Issue:** Young people who leave foster care without a permanent family or adequate supports face disproportionately high risks of homelessness, unemployment, incarceration, and poor health and educational outcomes. The transition to adulthood is particularly difficult when services end abruptly at age 18 or 21, and federal programs are often difficult for young adults with complex needs to navigate.

- **Action Requested:** Strengthen federal investment in transition-age youth by passing the Fostering the Future Act (H.R. 7432), which passed the House with unanimous support and is pending in the Senate, to expand access to housing, education and workforce opportunities, strengthen permanent connections and family supports, and improve outcomes for young people transitioning out of foster care.

- **Fund prevention of entry into the child welfare system**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Keeping families together improves outcomes for Illinois children and families and produces savings through family preservation.
  - **Issue:** Entering the child welfare system causes significant, well-documented harm and trauma to children and long-term harm to families and is costly to the state.
  - **Action Requested:** Design and fund, through federal reimbursement, additional mechanisms to prevent youth from entering the child welfare system.

Immigration Enforcement, Due Process, and Oversight

- **Limit warrantless civil immigration arrests**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Limiting warrantless civil immigration arrests would bring stronger oversight and fewer unlawful enforcement actions that disrupt Illinois families, workplaces, and communities.
  - **Issue:** The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) permits certain warrantless civil immigration arrests and provides limited statutory safeguards for them.
  - **Action Requested:** Amend the INA to limit warrantless civil immigration arrests, strengthen statutory standards for administrative warrants, and protect against unlawful or discriminatory enforcement.

- **Restore legal remedies for constitutional violations by federal immigration officers**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Restoring legal remedies would give Illinois residents stronger avenues for relief when federal immigration officers violate their constitutional rights, and strengthen accountability for federal law enforcement operating in Illinois.
  - **Issue:** Supreme Court precedent has limited individuals' ability to seek damages for certain constitutional violations committed by federal officers.
  - **Action Requested:** Extend Section 1983 protections to federal immigration officers and reform the Federal Tort Claims Act and the Westfall Act.

- **Codify protections for sensitive locations and limit 287(g) agreements**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Codified protections would preserve access to schools, early childhood centers and child care facilities, hospitals, places of worship,

courthouses, and polling places, and preserve trust between immigrant communities and local law enforcement.

- **Issue:** Protections for sensitive locations have been set by agency policy, not statute, and can change between administrations. Increased federal immigration enforcement near schools and early learning centers deters families from enrolling their children.
- **Action Requested:** Codify permanent protections for schools, early childhood centers and child care facilities, hospitals, places of worship, courthouses, and polling places; and set limits on federal–local immigration enforcement agreements under Section 287(g).

- **Bar federal agencies from withholding appropriated funds from states over immigration policy disagreements**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** A statutory bar on withholding funds would protect federal funding for Illinois public safety, transportation, education, health care, and other essential services, and give states certainty.
  - **Issue:** Congress controls federal spending and can limit how executive agencies condition or withhold appropriated funds.
  - **Action Requested:** Prohibit federal agencies from withholding congressionally appropriated funds from states based on immigration policy disagreements.
- **Establish enforceable national immigration detention standards and a private right of action**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Enforceable detention standards would improve health, safety, and due process for people detained in or transferred through Illinois and set consistent standards across facilities.
  - **Issue:** Detention standards exist mainly in regulations, contracts, and agency policy, and many are not independently enforceable by detained individuals.
  - **Action Requested:** Establish enforceable national detention standards, strengthen due process protections, and create a private right of action for people held in immigration detention.
- **Set federal limits on biometric surveillance in civil immigration enforcement**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Federal limits on biometric surveillance would protect Illinois residents' privacy and First Amendment rights.
  - **Issue:** Surveillance technologies used in immigration enforcement are governed by a patchwork of statutes, regulations, contracts, and internal policies.
  - **Action Requested:** Establish federal standards limiting the collection, use, retention, and sharing of biometric and personal data in civil immigration enforcement to protect privacy rights.

- **Strengthen oversight, transparency, and accountability for federal immigration enforcement — including cooperation with state investigations**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Stronger oversight would bring greater transparency about federal immigration enforcement in Illinois, better systems for identifying officers with histories of misconduct, and the ability of Illinois to investigate misconduct within its borders without federal stonewalling.
    - **Issue:** Independent oversight of immigration enforcement has been weakened, and the National Law Enforcement Accountability Database (NLEAD) is no longer in effect. When states investigate misconduct by federal agents operating within their borders, they have no assurance of federal cooperation.
    - **Action Requested:** Restore independent oversight mechanisms and fund them; reinstate NLEAD; require public reporting on enforcement activities and officer misconduct; and require federal authorities to cooperate with state investigations of activities by federal agents.
- **Create a legal framework for immigrants working in disability and care professions**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** A legal framework for these workers would stabilize a workforce that Illinois' disability and aging service systems cannot function without.
    - **Issue:** Thousands of direct service providers, nursing assistants, home health aides, and other care workers serving people with disabilities are at risk because of federal immigration enforcement.
    - **Action Requested:** Establish a clear, fair, and rational federal framework that allows and encourages individuals in these professions to work without harassment, up to and including permanent legal status.

Civil Rights and Democracy

- **Require continued EEO-1 workforce data reporting**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** The Illinois Department on Human Rights (IDHR) and other agencies use EEO-1 data (a mandatory annual survey collected by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) that breaks down a company's workforce by race, ethnicity, sex, and job category). to identify discrimination trends, target outreach, set enforcement priorities, and assess compliance. The requirement applies to thousands of employers nationwide, including hundreds operating in Illinois.
    - **Issue:** The EEOC has proposed discontinuing collection of employer workforce demographic data (EEO-1 reports) — one of the most important tools for identifying systemic employment discrimination.
    - **Action requested:** Require employers covered by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to continue submitting annual EEO-1 data, and preserve the EEOC's authority to collect, analyze, and publish aggregated workforce data.

- **Restore the protections of the Voting Rights Act**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Although Illinois may not redistrict as other states recently have, it could do so in the future under different leadership; strong federal Voting Rights Act protections guard against that.
    - **Issue:** Recent decisions, including Supreme Court rulings, have undermined voting rights protections that affect federal representation for every state.
    - **Action Requested:** Restore robust Voting Rights Act protections.

C. PROGRAM FUNDING

- **Maintain or increase funding for the Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP)**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Over the past five fiscal years, IDPH has received roughly $8.3 million a year in HPP funding, and the Chicago Department of Public Health an additional $2.8 million a year. IDPH passes most of this funding through to regional health care coalitions of hospitals, EMS providers, and local health departments, especially in rural and underserved areas. Losing HPP funding would cripple those coalitions and reduce emergency preparedness statewide.
    - **Issue:** HPP has been targeted for near-elimination in each of President Trump's last two budgets.
    - **Action Requested:** Maintain or increase HPP funding.
- **Fund 988 and behavioral health through the Mental Health Block Grant**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois' crisis system answered more than 262,000 988 calls in 2025, yet Illinois receives only $7.6 million a year in federal 988 support, leaving "someone to call, someone to respond, and somewhere to go" largely state-funded.
    - **Issue:** The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline and related behavioral health services rely on discretionary federal funding that leaves states carrying most of the cost.
    - **Action Requested:** Restore and create sustainable federal investment — through the Mental Health Block Grant rather than discretionary grants — in 988, prevention, substance use treatment, recovery supports, and crisis response, while reducing unnecessary administrative barriers.
- **Create a permanent federal funding stream for Community Violence Intervention (CVI)**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** A permanent CVI funding stream would strengthen Illinois' statewide violence prevention infrastructure and the hundreds of community organizations serving communities disproportionately affected by firearm violence.
    - **Issue:** The federal administration has eliminated nearly $170 million in federal investments in gun violence prevention, including shutting down the White House

office of Gun Violence Prevention. Since 2025, CVI programs lack reliable, multi-year federal funding.

- **Action requested:** Restore funding and also create a permanent federal funding stream for CVI while expanding support for youth development, workforce pathways, trauma recovery, and neighborhood revitalization.

- **Restore funding and capacity to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Restored EEOC funding and capacity would strengthen protections for Illinois workers and restore funding to IDHR for charges creditable under the IDHR–EEOC work-sharing contract.
  - **Issue:** EEOC funding and enforcement capacity — including enforcement for transgender rights and disparate impact liability — have been reduced.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore EEOC funding and capacity, including those enforcement areas.

- **Restore the Chapter 35 education benefit for high school students**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** VA Chapter 35, formally known as Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (DEA), provides educational benefits to the spouses and dependent children of veterans who have died, are missing in action, are captured, or have a permanent and total service-connected disability. Until August 1, 2026, eligible high school students could receive Chapter 35 benefits before graduating, allowing families to use those funds to help prepare for college, career training, apprenticeships, or other post-secondary opportunities.
  - **Issue:** The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) discontinued Chapter 35 benefits for high school students on August 1, 2026. As a result, eligible dependents lose access to financial support that many families used to offset the upfront costs of post-secondary education and training, and some individuals may never access the benefit if they do not subsequently enroll in an eligible educational or training program. The impact is likely to grow as the number of veterans with permanent and total service-connected disabilities continues to increase.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore eligibility for Chapter 35 benefits for high school students.

- **Protect federal funding for affordable housing development and preservation**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME), Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing (PRO Housing) funding supports affordable housing development, rehab, infrastructure, and community revitalization. These resources complement Illinois' Building Up Illinois Developments (BUILD) investments

and help state and local governments address housing shortages and rising development costs.

- **Issue**: The Trump Administration's FY 2027 budget proposes eliminating HOME, CDBG, and PRO Housing, threatening resources for affordable housing production and preservation at a time when Illinois is working to expand housing supply.
- **Action requested**: Reject proposed cuts and maintain or increase federal funding for HOME, CDBG, and PRO Housing to support affordable housing development, preservation, infrastructure, and efforts to reduce barriers to housing production.

- **Protect federal rental assistance funding and prevent the loss of housing vouchers**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Federal rental assistance through Housing Choice Vouchers, Project-Based Rental Assistance, and public housing helps low-income Illinois families, seniors, and people with disabilities afford stable housing. These programs are critical to preventing housing instability, displacement, and homelessness.
  - **Issue:** The Trump Administration's FY 2027 budget proposes restricting public housing authorities from issuing new housing vouchers or assisting additional families, with limited exceptions, while reducing funding for Project-Based Rental Assistance. These proposals would limit access to affordable housing and place additional strain on programs already facing rising housing costs and significant unmet demand.
  - **Action Requested:** Reject restrictions on issuing new housing vouchers and maintain or increase federal funding for Housing Choice Vouchers, Project-Based Rental Assistance, and public housing to preserve existing assistance and expand access for eligible households.
- **Restore funding and capacity to HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** HUD's fair housing programs support enforcement of federal housing discrimination protections, including funding for IDHR to investigate complaints under its HUD work-sharing agreement. Federal grants also support local fair housing organizations that investigate discrimination, educate residents, and help families access housing opportunities.
  - **Issue:** The Trump Administration's FY 2027 budget proposes cutting federal Fair Housing Activities by approximately 70%, from $86.4 million to $26 million, including eliminating the Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP). These cuts, combined with reductions in HUD's enforcement capacity, threaten investigations, weaken protections against housing discrimination, and reduce support for state and local enforcement partners.

- **Action Requested:** Restore and increase funding for HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, including FHIP and the Fair Housing Assistance Program (FHAP); restore staffing and investigative capacity; and ensure robust enforcement of the Fair Housing Act, including protections against discrimination based on sex, gender identity, and discriminatory practices with disparate impacts.

- **Restore funding for an independent DOJ Community Relations Service**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Restoring the Community Relations Service would restore federal conflict-resolution support to Illinois communities.
  - **Issue:** The Department of Justice Community Relations Service, mandated by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, provides conflict resolution and public safety services to all Americans.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore its funding and reinstate it as an independent office.

- **Permanently authorize Money Follows the Person**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois has used Money Follows the Person (MFP) to help people with disabilities and older adults transition home. Permanent authorization would provide predictable funding to expand transitions, strengthen housing and community supports, and reduce unnecessary institutionalization.
  - **Issue:** Money Follows the Person (MFP) has helped states move people from institutions into community settings, but repeated short-term congressional extensions have created funding uncertainty.
  - **Action Requested:** Permanently authorize the MFP Demonstration Program with sustained federal funding.

- **Increase funding for the Developmental Disabilities Act Network**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** The Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (ICDD) works with Equip for Equality (Illinois' Protection and Advocacy system) and the Institute on Disability and Human Development at the University of Illinois at Chicago to improve employment, community living, education, health care, and transportation for people with developmental disabilities.
  - **Issue:** Funding for the DD Act Network — State Councils on Developmental Disabilities, Protection and Advocacy systems, University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, and Projects of National Significance — has not kept pace with inflation or the growing complexity of state systems.
  - **Action Requested:** Increase appropriations for every component of the Network, establish predictable funding that keeps pace with inflation, protect each partner's independence and authority, and invest in innovation, technical assistance, leadership development, and data.

EDUCATION

A. EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

Civil Rights and Student Access

- **Restore the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, reopen its regional offices, and expand state work-sharing**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** A fully restored Office for Civil Rights (OCR) would strengthen protections for Illinois students in K-12 and higher education and eliminate inefficient overlap between federal and state enforcement.
    - **Issue:** Weakening or discontinuing the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) removes due-process options for families and dilutes support for state education agencies that conduct federally mandated Perkins V Methods of Administration monitoring. Closing regional offices — including Chicago's — eliminates local investigation of service denials for English Learners, students with disabilities, and other protected classes, as well as civil rights training for educators and families. Schools rely on federal guidance for consistent equity protections under Title VI and Title IX.
    - **Action Requested:** Fully restore OCR within the Department of Education, with funding and robust enforcement; reopen regional offices, including Chicago, to investigate complaints, provide technical assistance, and prevent fragmentation of special education and English Learner services; and expand enforcement cooperation through work-sharing contracts with states that have similar civil rights protections in education.
- **Revoke the "English Only" executive order**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Revoking the "English Only" order would protect Illinois' dual-language programs and the students and families who rely on language access.
    - **Issue:** Executive directives promoting "English Only" standards undermine language access, dual-language programs, and required translation and interpretation for non-English speakers, limiting academic growth for language learners and penalizing multilingual instruction.
    - **Action Requested:** Revoke the "English Only" executive order to protect dual-language learning, expand world language education, and preserve civil rights for English Learner students and families.

English Learners and Special Education

- **Reopen the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) and reinstate English Learner guidance**

- **Overview in Illinois:** Reopening OELA would restore programmatic clarity for Illinois districts serving English Learners and strengthen the bilingual teacher pipeline.
- **Issue:** The closure of the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) and rescission of the joint English Learner "Dear Colleague" Letter eliminated federal technical assistance. States and districts now lack clear parameters for language-instruction compliance, dual-language curricula, and Seal of Biliteracy certification.
- **Action Requested:** Reopen OELA within the Department of Education; reinstate the joint EL Dear Colleague Letter; and expand competitive National Professional Development grants (such as the PLEDGE project) for bilingual educator training.

- **Restore federal special education oversight, communication, and support**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Weakened federal special education oversight shifts compliance responsibility to Illinois districts, producing more disputes, missed timelines, and uneven services. Illinois may face $50–$100 million in additional annual costs for compensatory services, legal fees, staffing, and private placements, and DCFS could incur $10–$20 million more a year supporting youth whose educational needs go unmet.
  - **Issue:** The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has reduced direct guidance; technical assistance centers addressing racial overidentification in special education have been cut; and federal rules restrict high-population states to a single Parent Training and Information Center. Reduced federal monitoring, accountability, and enforcement under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) increases the risk of delayed evaluations and inconsistent services — especially for youth in care, who have high rates of disability and frequent school moves.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore full federal monitoring, accountability, enforcement, and support of IDEA; restore direct OSEP communication (Dear Colleague Letters and monthly meetings with state education agencies); re-fund technical assistance centers addressing disproportionality; and authorize funding for at least two Parent Training and Information Centers in high-population, geographically diverse states.

Agency Capacity and Student Well-Being

- **Re-establish and adequately staff the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education at the Department of Education and protect adult education funding**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Re-establishing OCTAE would retain federal educational leadership, maintain effective coordination with DOL, and ensure that dedicated federal adult education funding remains dependable for ICCB and the local programs serving adult learners.

- **Issue:** Shifting Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) staff to the Department of Labor has disrupted K-12 and postsecondary CTE, leaving only two federal staff to support CTE and few staff to support adult basic education across all states and territories.
- **Action Requested:** Protect dedicated adult education funding and the existing state formula grant structure. Re-establish OCTAE within the Department of Education to oversee secondary and postsecondary CTE (Perkins V) and Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs, while maintaining operational links with DOL.

- **Maintain evidence-based USDA school meal standards**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Evidence-based USDA school meal standards protect student health and district nutrition budgets.
  - **Issue:** Federal proposals to mandate whole milk in school meals conflict with established dietary science, raise district costs, and strain local nutrition budgets.
  - **Action Requested:** Maintain evidence-based USDA school meal standards prioritizing low-fat and skim milk.

Research

- **Protect negotiated university indirect-cost rates**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Negotiated indirect-cost rates sustain research capacity at Illinois' public universities.
  - **Issue:** Administrative caps (such as 15%) on indirect facilities and administrative (F&A) cost recovery for research threaten the capacity of public research universities. Universities must meet extensive federal requirements, such as human subjects protections, financial audits, data security, storage and management, allowable materials and resource purchases by means of procurement. Indirect cost reimbursements fund the infrastructure needed to do all this, and short-shifting these allowable costs can harm subjects, studies and institutions.
  - **Action Requested:** Protect negotiated indirect-cost rate agreements. As a backstop, Congress should prohibit arbitrary agency research cost caps.

B. LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Department Governance and Civil Rights

- **Restore the U.S. Department of Education to its Full Capacity**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Restoring the full capacity and authority of the U.S. Department of Education would protect critical federal funding, financial aid, and institutional support for Illinois colleges and universities. A fully functioning Department is essential to administering Pell Grants, Workforce Pell, federal student loans, and work-study programs, as well as supporting community

colleges, workforce development, adult education, college access, and student success initiatives.

- **Issue:** Executive Order 14242 and subsequent administrative actions seek to dismantle the Department of Education, substantially reduce its workforce, and transfer key functions to other federal agencies. Reductions in Federal Student Aid staffing threaten effective administration and oversight of federal financial aid programs, while the transfer of postsecondary education, career and technical education, and adult education responsibilities to the Department of Labor separates these functions from the broader higher education system. These changes create administrative uncertainty, threaten continuity of federal grant programs, and undermine institutional support, accountability, civil rights enforcement, and federal education research and data collection.
- **Action Requested:** Restoration of the Department of Education's full operational capacity and statutory responsibilities, including adequate staffing and resources within the Department to ensure effective administration of FAFSA, Pell Grants, Workforce Pell, federal student loans, and work-study programs. Maintain dedicated federal education expertise and oversight for postsecondary education, Perkins career and technical education, WIOA Title II adult education, TRIO, GEAR UP, and Title III and Title V institutional support programs. Preserve federal civil rights enforcement, education research, and data collection functions. Require congressional authorization for the permanent transfer of statutory education responsibilities to other agencies, and ensure meaningful consultation with state higher education agencies and institutions before significant administrative reorganizations.

- **Retain all special education functions within the U.S. Department of Education**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Students with disabilities deserve appropriate protections and stable administration of federal education programs. Cuts to the federal Office of Civil Rights has left states scrambling to fill gaps in investigations related to the rights provided to our most at-risk students.
  - **Issue:** Moving special education to HHS improperly shifts it from an instructional model to a medical model and separates students with disabilities from the broader education community.
  - **Action Requested:** Codify that federal special education services remain within the federal education system. Conduct oversight of unauthorized transfers of congressionally mandated programs, and require explicit legislative approval, public impact assessments, and formal consultation with state education agencies before any reorganization.
- **Reinstate the National Blue Ribbon School process at the U. S. Department of Education**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** When the Trump Administration abruptly ended the Blue Ribbon program in August 2025, Illinois chose to proceed with recognizing those schools that had already been identified by the U.S. Department of Education.

Further, using the federal framework, we began our own process of identifying our Governor's Blue Ribbon schools for 2026 and took over funding the review and recognition process.

- **Issue:** The U.S. Department of Education has historically, for four decades, overseen the Blue Ribbon School process. In 2025, the Trump Administration, after having selected schools to receive the Blue Ribbon status across every state, suddenly withdrew support for the program and refused to recognize the schools it had already designated. Subsequently, states had to decide whether to continue their own "blue ribbon" process, or scrap it.
- **Action Requested:** Reinstate the Blue Ribbon School application and review process on the part of states. This will ensure a level playing field with schools having to meet the same criteria to apply regardless of their state. Continue funding for the review process as well as the materials (plaques, banners, flags) provided to designated schools.

- **Protect lawful diversity, equity, inclusion, and student success initiatives**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Statutory protection would give Illinois districts and colleges legal certainty to continue proven student success programs.
  - **Issue:** Executive Orders 14151 and 14173 terminate federal DEI offices and grants and direct agencies to impose new civil rights certifications and penalties on funding recipients. The resulting uncertainty discourages lawful, evidence-based programs that close documented achievement and completion gaps for low-income, first-generation, and other historically disadvantaged students.
  - **Action Requested:** Congress should counteract Executive Orders 14151 and 14173 and any actions that fundamentally impact student success.
- **Codify *Plyler v. Doe***
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Codifying *Plyler v. Doe* would lock in every Illinois child's right to a public education.
  - **Issue:** Proposed legislation in multiple states would collect students' immigration status to condition enrollment or tuition, directly challenging the Supreme Court's 1982 *Plyler v. Doe* decision.
  - **Action Requested:** Codify *Plyler v. Doe* in federal statute to guarantee public education regardless of immigration status.
- **Codify the Head Start Program Performance Standards into statute**
  - **Overview in Illinois**: Codifying the Head Start requirements that are currently rule into law and protect the Program standards from deregulation – this will reduce burden for Illinois Head Start families and providers, restore access to comprehensive services, continue to support equity and inclusion for all children and families, and reduce the pressure on other State early childhood programs.

- **Issue**: The proposed deregulation of Head Start Program Performance Standards would reduce access to services for families, push English-language education and assimilation, increase burden on providers, lower the quality of Head Start services, and add undue pressure on other child care and social services.
- **Action Requested**: Enact legislation codifying the specifics of current Head Start Program Performance Standards that are currently only in federal regulations.

- **Codify the current Head Start regulations that would be rescinded by the "Restoring Flexibility to Support Head Start Program Access" Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) into law**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Enact legislation codifying the Head Start regulatory requirements for competitive wage standards to increase the quality and number of educators serving children and families with the greatest needs.
  - **Issue**: In summer 2026 HHS rescinded Head Start rules requiring competitive wage and benefit requirements, this action exacerbates the early childhood workforce shortage crisis, lowers the quality of educators (and therefore Head Start services), and reduces the number of slots.
  - **Action Requested**: Enact legislation codifying the Head Start competitive wage standards.

- **Protect current funding for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and introduce Federal Paid Family Leave**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** The CCDF funding Illinois currently receives from the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) supports the state's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). CCAP supports working families with access to affordable, quality child care. Currently, providers must apply to be eligible to serve families who receive financial assistance from the State. Current providers do not include stay-at-home parents.
  - **Issue:** Under leaked draft rulemaking, HHS is proposing to allow CCDF funds to be used for married couples with a stay-at-home spouse. These funds are intended to support low-income families who need child care to maintain employment or education, so this change would redirect resources away from that group and toward households that do not use paid care.
  - **Action Requested:** Enact legislation counteracting the CCDF proposed rule and proactively introduce legislation to create a Federal Paid Family Leave program so families do not have to choose between caregiving and their economic security. The legislation could draw upon previous federal proposals allowing working parents to take paid time off while receiving adequate wage replacement. The FFY28 budget would need to align with needed resources for implementation.

College Affordability and Student Debt

- **Pass the Pell Grant Preservation and Expansion Act**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** The Pell Grant Preservation and Expansion Act would protect and expand college access for low-income Illinois students.
    - **Issue:** FAFSA simplification and short-term Workforce Pell have greatly expanded the number of students eligible for Pell without a matching increase in appropriations. Combined with a maximum award frozen at $7,395 since 2023, the program faces structural shortfalls that risk future award cuts or narrower eligibility.
    - **Action Requested:** Pass the Pell Grant Preservation and Expansion Act to raise the maximum award to $10,000, make Pell fully mandatory funding insulated from annual appropriations shortfalls, and restore purchasing power for low-income students.
- **Restore Grad PLUS and the historic definition of "professional degree"**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois' shortage of skilled nurses already exceeds 15,000 and is growing; reducing access to graduate financing for nursing and allied health programs will deepen health workforce shortages as the population ages.
    - **Issue:** H.R. 1 eliminated Grad PLUS and capped graduate borrowing through the Direct Loan program at $20,500 a year for non-professional graduate programs and $50,000 a year for professional programs. It also let the Department of Education define "professional" students; in April 2026 the Department defined the term narrowly, excluding nursing, speech pathology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, physician assistant, and other health workforce programs — halving their lifetime federal borrowing limits. For many, this means that Direct Loans alone will not be enough to cover costs, particularly for programs that include an experiential component—like clinicals—that might preclude other employment. The new caps threaten pipelines in high-cost, critical fields such as health care, mental health, and education and push students into costlier private loans (which may not even be accessible if they have limited credit history or lack a cosigner). Lowering the loan limits is also expected to exacerbate inequities, as underrepresented groups including lower-income students will face higher barriers to careers that require advanced degrees.
    - **Action Requested:** Revisit access to federal student loans that can cover the full cost of attendance for all graduate students through unsubsidized Direct Loans, Grad PLUS loans, or a combination. Restore the historic definition of "professional degree" and/or re-establish Grad PLUS.
- **Fix H.R. 1's Repayment Assistance Plan and repeal loan proration for part-time students**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** The end of SAVE has raised borrowers' monthly payments by an average of $500 or more — $6,000 a year — according to the Student Debt

Crisis Center, increasing the risk of default and leaving Illinois families less to spend on starting a family, buying a home, or managing daily costs.

- **Issue:** In addition to ending the Saving on a Valuable Education (SAVE) plan for more than 7 million borrowers, H.R. 1 replaced prior income-driven repayment options with a Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP) that has no income protection floor, raising monthly payments for middle-income borrowers and lengthening the repayment period before being eligible for loan forgiveness. Its Schedule of Reductions (SOR) also forces colleges to prorate federal loans for part-time students, penalizing non-traditional learners with fixed living costs.
- **Action Requested:** Repeal the applicable sections of H.R. 1 to reinstate affordable repayment options. At a minimum, amend RAP to include a poverty-line income protection floor, increase dependent deductions, and lower the forgiveness window to 20 years; and repeal the SOR proration mandate.

- **Restore the tax exemption for student loan forgiveness**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Restoring the tax exemption would ensure Illinois borrowers do not lose the benefit of student loan forgiveness to a surprise tax bill.
  - **Issue:** The federal exemption from income tax on student loan forgiveness for borrowers in income-driven repayment expired January 1, 2026, exposing borrowers to large, unexpected tax bills.
  - **Action Requested:** Reinstate the tax exemption on student loan forgiveness.
- **Strengthen Borrower Defense relief and institutional accountability**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Borrower Defense gives Illinois borrowers harmed by institutional misconduct a federal pathway to loan relief. It complements IBHE's oversight of private business and vocational schools and the Attorney General's consumer protection enforcement.
  - **Issue:** Sections 85001 and 85002 of Public Law 119-21 (139 Stat. 355–356) provide that the 2022 Borrower Defense and closed school discharge rules do not apply to loans that first originate before July 1, 2035. Borrower Defense claims on those loans are instead decided under the regulations that took effect July 1, 2020, which set a higher evidentiary bar, eliminate the group-claim process, and permit partial relief. This weakens both borrower relief and institutional accountability.
  - **Action Requested:** Repeal Sections 85001 and 85002 and codify clear, enforceable Borrower Defense and closed school discharge protections in the Higher Education Act to reduce reliance on regulations subject to repeated delay, litigation, and revision. Statutory protections should include accessible individual and group claims; consideration of evidence and findings from state regulators and attorneys general; timely decisions and implementation of approved discharges; automatic closed school discharges for eligible borrowers; and recovery of discharge costs from responsible institutions where warranted, with appropriate due process. Provide the U.S. Department of Education with adequate

staffing and resources to adjudicate claims and process discharges, and require public reporting on pending claims, processing times, and outcomes.

International Students

- **Prioritize timely international student visa interviews and processing**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Reliable visa processing determines whether admitted international students and scholars arrive at Illinois institutions in time to begin coursework and research. With over 66,635 international students enrolled in Illinois higher education institutions in 2025, their ability to obtain prompt visa interviews and processing to support timely arrival and enrollment sustains academic programs, research capacity, and local economies.
    - **Issue:** In two consecutive peak seasons, federal scheduling decisions pushed student visa interviews down the queue: a nationwide interview pause in 2025 and World Cup appointment prioritization in 2026. As a result, admitted students could not secure interviews before their programs began, which forced deferrals and disrupted enrollment, research staffing, and institutional budgets. In Fall 2026, Illinois institutions reported significant declines in international student enrollment. Across the University of Illinois System, enrollment among international graduate and professional students fell by 15.4%. The Illinois Institute of Technology also cited declining international graduate enrollment as a contributor to financial pressures that led to workforce reductions. The national outlook suggests change is needed to reverse these declines, with NAFSA projecting as many as 111,000 fewer international students at U.S. institutions this fall, costing up to $3.4 billion in economic activity, and 96% of institutions reporting declines in new enrollment citing visa application concerns.
    - **Action Requested:** Direct the Department of State to restore priority scheduling for F-1, M-1, and J-1 applicants during peak issuance periods tied to documented program start dates. Provide targeted appropriations to expand consular capacity at high-demand posts. Require advance notice to Congress and institutions before any pause or reprioritization of student visa scheduling. Require regular public reporting on appointment wait times, issuances, and refusals by post. Maintain all required security screening throughout. Reintroduce the Visa Processing Improvement Act (first introduced in 2023) and include provisions to establish wait-time targets, published issuance data, and more consular staffing during the spring and summer peak periods.
- **Preserve and codify duration of status for international students and exchange visitors**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Duration of status allows eligible international students and scholars at Illinois institutions to remain in lawful status for as long as they maintain a full course of study or authorized program activity and make normal progress, as well as remain tracked in SEVIS. This allows them to complete degrees, research, and authorized training without arbitrary end dates.

- **Issue:** DHS's July 2026 final rule would replace duration of status with fixed admission periods capped at four years. Students needing more time would have to file extension requests. The rule would also shorten the post-completion grace period and restrict mid-program transfers and changes of major. A federal court blocked the rule nationwide on September 14, 2026, but DHS has appealed, and the rule could take effect if the injunction is lifted. Uncertainty over this policy is reported as a major factor driving decline in international student enrollment. Codification would reassure international students as they weigh the risk of instability and changes that could affect their completion of higher education programs in the U.S. A fixed term system would likely cause a backlog of requests for extensions that would add to already long visa delays. For doctoral programs, a four-year limit is also a real challenge, since most programs take longer than four years by design.
- **Action requested:** Enact legislation codifying duration of status with no fixed end date for F and J nonimmigrants who maintain their status. Prohibit implementation of the July 2026 rule or a substantially similar rule. Preserve reasonable flexibility for program extensions, institutional transfers, changes in educational objective, and post-completion grace periods, subject to existing SEVIS reporting and compliance requirements.

- **Protect authorized practical training opportunities**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois hosts 66,635 international students, fifth among the states. According to SEVIS data compiled by the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, 17,560 graduates of Illinois institutions participated in Optional Practical Training in 2024. The OPT Observatory finds that nearly half of Illinois OPT participants work in Illinois, giving employers access to specialized talent trained here. NAFSA's Association of International Educators estimates that international students contributed $2.4 billion to the Illinois economy in 2024–25 and supported 22,479 jobs.
  - **Issue:** DHS has proposed charging institutions $70,000 for each student's initial OPT recommendation and $30,000 for each subsequent recommendation, including the STEM extension. These costs would fall on Illinois colleges or be passed on to students and employers. In practice, the proposal would end OPT access for many graduates and weaken Illinois institutions' ability to recruit.
  - **Action requested:** Codify OPT and the STEM extension in statute. Prohibit fees for practical training beyond the reasonable cost of adjudication, and block finalization of the proposed OPT fee rule. Maintain appropriate employer and student compliance safeguards. Provide sufficient USCIS processing capacity so that administrative delays do not interrupt otherwise authorized training.

- **Restore stable, predictable guidance for Curricular Practical Training**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Curricular Practical Training (CPT) lets international students at Illinois institutions complete credit-bearing internships, co-ops, and practicums with Illinois employers as part of their academic programs. It

advances IBHE's strategic plan, A Thriving Illinois, which calls for expanding high-quality experiential and work-based learning, internships, and apprenticeships, while also keeping talent in Illinois.

- **Issue:** In August 2026, federal immigration officials issued informal guidance, without public notice or comment, that sharply narrows when schools may authorize CPT. Under the new reading, elective for-credit internships generally no longer qualify, and improper authorizations could put a school's certification at risk. Illinois institutions responded immediately. The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign stopped approving CPT tied to elective courses, and Illinois Tech paused CPT processing for programs without a mandatory practical training component. Under the new guidance, students with internships tied to elective courses can no longer obtain CPT, putting planned placements at risk.
- **Action requested:** Require that substantive changes to practical training eligibility go through notice-and-comment rulemaking, with reasonable implementation periods. Clarify in statute that CPT is available for credit-bearing practical training that is an integral part of an established curriculum, including elective coursework. Protect students whose CPT was authorized under prior guidance. Maintain existing SEVIS reporting and authorization requirements.

Institutions, Workforce, and Accountability

- **Restore and Protect Minority-Serving Institution Funding**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Protecting Minority-Serving Institution (MSI) funding is critical to Illinois community colleges and universities serving significant populations of historically underserved students. These resources support institutional capacity, academic programs, technology infrastructure, and student success initiatives, at Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs), and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs).
  - **Issue:** The U.S. Department of Education has discontinued discretionary funding for MSI programs for two consecutive fiscal years, despite continued congressional appropriations, and reprogrammed them to other grant programs as allowable by Congress. The Department has also redirected mandatory MSI funding appropriated for FY 2025 and FY 2026 to Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Tribal Colleges and Universities. These actions threaten institutional stability, undermine congressional funding directives, and jeopardize programs supporting historically underserved students. The redirection of mandatory funding raises constitutional concerns because Congress has specifically required these resources go to MSI programs.
  - **Action Requested:** Congress should protect mandatory and discretionary funding for Minority-Serving Institutions under Titles III and V of the Higher Education Act, by explicitly prohibiting the Department of Education from reprogramming these funds for other purposes. The Department should be required to administer appropriations consistent with congressional directives and to address the

restoration of previously redirected funding. Congress should sue the Executive Branch for illegally redirecting mandatory MSI funds.

- **Permanently authorize Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Permanent authorization of Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grants would give Illinois community colleges stable, flexible workforce funding. This would support statewide and regional workforce priorities, including the development and expansion of high-demand programs, investments in equipment and laboratory facilities, industry partnerships, and stackable credentials that provide pathways to employment and further education.
    - **Issue:** Without permanent authorization, agencies can change grant focus areas each year — for example, limiting Round 6 strictly to short-term Workforce Pell credentials — diverting community colleges from broader regional workforce, laboratory, and credentialing priorities. While Workforce Pell represents an important opportunity, community colleges must also have the flexibility to develop longer-term credentials, expand existing programs, respond to emerging industries, and meet regional employer needs. Additionally, Round 6's emphasis on large statewide consortia limits opportunities for both large systems, as well as individual colleges and smaller regional partnerships to pursue innovative workforce initiatives.
    - **Action requested:** Authorize the program in statute with clear guardrails, establishing dedicated funding to states for system capacity alongside competitive innovation grants, and prohibit agencies from making unrelated administrative priorities mandatory funding criteria. Define eligible activities broadly, preserve competitive opportunities for individual community colleges and regional consortia, and ensure that funding priorities reflect documented state and regional workforce needs, rather than being restricted to a single federal initiative or credential type.
- **Preserve stable accreditation and the higher education regulatory triad**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** A stable accreditation system protects Illinois students and the integrity of the federal aid they rely on. It also supports institutional quality, credit transfer, and public confidence in higher education.
    - **Issue:** Federal efforts to rapidly expand the number of accreditors and make it easier for institutions to switch accreditors could weaken quality assurance and blur the roles of states, accreditors, and the federal government. The Trump Administration is also attempting to reshape accreditation to pressure institutions to eliminate DEI programs and promote “intellectual diversity.” These new requirements raise questions about the preservation of institutional autonomy, which is critical to a high-quality educational landscape.
    - **Action requested:** Congress should block accreditation rules that remove guardrails for predatory institutions and interfere with institutional autonomy, and ensure the implementation of any part of the new regulations include strong consumer protections, consistent academic and financial standards, transparent

recognition procedures, state participation, and safeguards against switching accreditors to evade accountability. The triad of states, recognized accreditors, and the federal government should be preserved.

- **Pass the College Transparency Act**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** The College Transparency Act would give Illinois students and families better information for college decisions.
    - **Issue:** Students lack accessible outcome data to evaluate the return on investment of majors and institutions.
    - **Action Requested:** Enact the bipartisan College Transparency Act to create a secure, privacy-protected postsecondary data network.

C. PROGRAM FUNDING

- **Sustain and expand Title III-A, Title I-C Migrant Education, and Consortium Incentive Grants**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Title III-A, Title I-C, and Consortium Incentive Grant funding protects services for Illinois' English Learners and migrant students.
    - **Issue:** Recurring budget proposals to zero out Title III-A (English Language Acquisition) and Title I-C (Migrant Education) create uncertainty, staff turnover, and service gaps affecting more than 5 million students nationwide. Potential cuts to Consortium Incentive Grants threaten multi-state tools (such as IDRC and iSOSY) that maintain continuous schooling and health tracking for mobile farmworker children.
    - **Action Requested:** Maintain and expand mandatory and discretionary funding for Title III-A and Title I-C formula grants; protect Consortium Incentive Grants; and sustain High School Equivalency Program (HEP) and College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP) grants.
- **Preserve and expand TRIO and GEAR UP**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** TRIO and GEAR UP keep college-access pipelines open for Illinois' first-generation and low-income students.
    - **Issue:** Executive proposals would eliminate TRIO ($1.191 billion) entirely and sharply cut GEAR UP, removing advising, tutoring, and college-preparation pipelines for more than one million low-income, disabled, and first-generation students nationwide.
    - **Action Requested:** Reject the proposed eliminations, lock in sustained funding increases that account for inflation, and allow coordination with state basic-needs, emergency aid, and advising initiatives.

- **Restore the Institute of Education Sciences and fund State Longitudinal Data Systems**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Institute of Education Sciences (IES) and State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) funding preserves the data infrastructure Illinois uses to report and improve student outcomes.
    - **Issue:** Staffing and technical assistance cuts at the IES have compromised National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) operations — including elimination of pre-release workshops — and threaten future SLDS grants that enable transparent reporting on academic and workforce outcomes.
    - **Action Requested:** Restore full staffing and funding for IES (including NCER, NCES, NCSER, and NAEP) and permanently fund SLDS grants and State Support Team technical assistance.
- **Protect and expand access to Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) funding**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** CCAMPIS provides federal grants to institutions of higher education, including Illinois community colleges, to support childcare services for low-income student parents. These resources help students balance family responsibilities with postsecondary education, improving access, persistence, and completion.
    - **Issue:** In FY 2026, the U.S. Department of Education changed its grantmaking approach by frontloading four-year CCAMPIS awards, using current-year appropriations to fund future years of individual grants. As a result, only 40 institutions nationwide received awards, compared with approximately 148 initially anticipated. This approach significantly reduced the number of institutions and student parents able to benefit from the program and created uncertainty about future grant competitions.
    - **Action Requested:** Congress should prevent the frontloading of multi-year CCAMPIS grants to maximize the number of institutions receiving awards.
- **Protect timely awarding and distribution of Early/Head Start funding sufficient to satisfy program requirements, including competitive wage and benefits.**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Adequate funding to meet high-quality Head Start requirements awarded and distributed timely will allow Illinois Early/Head Start programs to continue service delivery to families without disruptions, while maintaining a qualified workforce.
    - **Issue:** An attempted funding freeze, lack of sufficient funding to implement program standards, and threats of program elimination have reduced Head Start program stability, causing programs to lose workforce, reduce services and slots, or close.

- **Action requested:** Ensure prompt and adequate awarding and distribution of Head Start and Early Head Start grants that meet high-quality standards and competitive wages and benefits.

- **Block Proposed Changes to the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR)**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois higher education institutions rely on federal grants to support workforce development, adult education, student success initiatives, institutional capacity, and services for underserved students. Proposed changes to EDGAR would introduce significant uncertainty into the administration of these grants, undermining institutions' ability to plan and sustain multiyear programs, hire and retain staff, and make long-term commitments to students. Smaller and rural community colleges, which often have more limited administrative capacity and financial reserves, could be particularly vulnerable to sudden funding disruptions.
  - **Issue:** The U.S. Department of Education's proposed EDGAR regulations would politicize discretion over grant awards and administration. The changes would permit the Department to terminate grants *for convenience*, even when recipients are meeting performance expectations and complying with award requirements. They would also allow competitive preferences for institutions willing to accept reduced indirect cost reimbursements, potentially disadvantaging colleges that depend on those funds to cover essential administrative, financial, technology, and compliance functions. Additional provisions would expand consideration of executive orders in grant compliance, increase federal discretion over continuation funding, and reduce certain grantmaking transparency requirements. Collectively, these changes will weaken merit-based grantmaking, destabilize federally supported programs, and interrupt educational opportunities for students.
  - **Action Requested:** Congress should prohibit implementation of the proposed EDGAR changes through appropriations restrictions or separate legislation, preserving merit-based grantmaking, established indirect cost reimbursement policies, and protections against arbitrary grant termination. If the regulations are finalized, Congress should also consider using the Congressional Review Act to overturn them. These actions should protect existing multiyear federal grants, institutional due process, and the continuity of educational services for students.

BUDGET AND ECONOMY

A. EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

Federal Grantmaking

- **Withdraw OMB's proposed rewrite of the federal grant rules (2 C.F.R. 200)**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois receives billions of dollars a year in discretionary federal grants supporting health, human services, housing, education, public safety, and community programs. The proposed 2 C.F.R. 200 rule would expose the state and its community providers to sudden loss of funding with no recourse, impose substantial new monitoring burdens on every state agency that passes funds through to subrecipients, and create new opportunities for favoritism from an administration that has already chosen not to support states that did not support it in the last election.
    - **Issue:** On May 29, 2026, the federal Office of Management and Budget, with federal grantmaking agencies, proposed rewriting 2 C.F.R. Part 200 — the "Uniform Guidance" that governs every federal grant and that Illinois incorporates into its own grant administration through the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA). The proposed rule would codify executive orders tying federal funding to compliance with Trump Administration policies on DEI and immigration. Among its provisions:
        - **Guidance becomes regulation.** "Guidance" would become binding "regulation," requiring conforming updates across GATA and the Illinois Administrative Code.
        - **Centralized rulemaking.** Amendments would take effect government-wide when final, eliminating individual agencies' discretion to adopt or implement them.
        - **Political review replaces peer review.** Merit review would be required for all discretionary awards, but subject to a new pre-issuance review for legality, "agency priorities," and "national interest" — making peer-review recommendations advisory to political appointees.
        - **Broader grounds to deny awards.** Risk review would expand to include capacity for high-dollar awards, funding-opportunity goals, past performance, "questionable practices," financial management, and potentially reputational or national-interest risk.
        - **Discretionary termination.** Agencies and pass-through entities could terminate awards when "in the agency's interest," when an award does not advance agency priorities, or for "other lawful reasons," with new temporary suspension procedures — and without meaningful appeal.

        - **Expanded noncompliance remedies,** including failure to comply with the U.S. Constitution and agency cooperation with private causes of action.
        - **Elimination of fixed-amount awards** unless authorized by statute, reducing flexibility and increasing reporting burdens.
        - **Narrowed contracting language,** replacing affirmative steps for small, minority, women-owned, and labor-surplus-area businesses with a generic reference to "small businesses."
        - **New national-policy restrictions,** including prohibiting use of federal awards to support disparate-impact liability theories, viewpoint rules for event and meeting services, and foreign-collaboration restrictions on research funds.
        - **Mandatory E-Verify** for recipients and new pass-through monitoring duties, including SAM.gov subaward reporting deadlines, affiliate payment classification, reputation-risk monitoring, and certification requirements.
        - **Elimination of funding** for any proposal that includes DEIA initiatives.
    - **Action Requested:** Withdraw the proposed rule and restore the previous Uniform Guidance. If the administration finalizes it, Congress should overturn it through the Congressional Review Act or appropriations riders (see *Enact statutory protections for federal grant recipients*, Budget and Economy — Legislative Actions).

U.S. Beef

- **Expand USDA assistance to support reopening the Joslin plant under an independent operator**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Due to tariffs and trade wars, Tyson Foods' sudden closure of its Joslin beef processing plant displaced more than 2,500 workers and eliminated a critical market for cattle producers across Illinois and the Midwest. Attracting a qualified, independent beef production operator to reopen the facility would restore jobs, strengthen regional processing capacity, and provide ranchers with another competitive market for their livestock.
    - **Issue:** USDA's Strengthening Processing for U.S. Ranchers (SPUR) program is designed to preserve independent processing capacity, but its focus on operating facilities leaves a gap for recently shuttered plants. Acquisition and reopening costs, uncertainty about eligibility, and application deadlines create barriers for a new operator seeking to bring Joslin back into production.
    - **Action Requested:** USDA should establish a facility reactivation track within SPUR or through complementary Commodity Credit Corporation authority to provide transitional support for qualified, independent operators seeking to reopen

recently shuttered, federally inspected beef processing facilities. USDA should also clarify that Joslin would qualify for standard SPUR operating support if acquired and reopened by an eligible independent beef production operator, and provide a rolling or extended application window to accommodate the acquisition and reopening process.

Broadband, Energy, and Clean Financing

- **Release the frozen Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund and Solar for All awards**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** The Trump Administration has frozen approximately $264 million awarded to IFA's Climate Bank programs. This includes $108 million under the National Clean Investment Fund and $156 million under Solar for All — funds intended to cut emissions and deliver benefits to underserved communities.
    - **Issue:** The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), created by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, was designed to provide low-cost financing for clean energy through a network of lenders, plus expanded Solar for All funding for low-income rooftop solar. The Trump Administration terminated awards already made and is defending the cancellation in court on unproven claims of fraud and abuse.
    - **Action Requested:** EPA should release the funds. Congress should assert that EPA must spend funding that was passed, appropriated, and contractually obligated.
- **Release the remaining Grid Resilience (40101(d)) funds**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** The remaining $16 million in Grid Resilience funds would let IFA make additional grants to municipalities and electric and energy cooperatives to strengthen and modernize the grid.
    - **Issue:** The 40101(d) Grid Resilience program, part of DOE's Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships Program, funds state and tribal grid modernization. IFA has received only $24 million for program years 1–3.
    - **Action Requested:** DOE should release the remaining $16 million for program years 4 and 5.
- **Expedite Advanced Metering Infrastructure waivers for Grid Resilience projects**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** $12.1 million in federal funding is waiting on AMI waivers.
    - **Issue:** AMI equipment is not made in America, so every 40101(d) project using AMI meters must obtain a DOE waiver — which has taken upward of 10 months.
    - **Action Requested:** Speed up the waiver process or issue a blanket AMI waiver.

Health Insurance

- **Stop Federal CMS from extending H.R. 1's provider-tax limits to insurance premium assessments**

- **Overview in Illinois:** Withdrawing the CMS provision would remove budget uncertainty and let Illinois continue funding Get Covered Illinois.
- **Issue:** A Federal CMS proposed rule enforcing a section of H.R. 1 (P.L. 119-21) on Medicaid provider taxes goes beyond the statute, extending limits on state taxing authority to assessments on premiums of issuers selling in the individual and group markets. Those assessments fund non-Medicaid activities, including Get Covered Illinois, the state's official ACA marketplace.
- **Action Requested:** Federal CMS should withdraw the overreaching provision. As a backstop, Congress should enact a statutory change overriding it.

- **Resume HHS review of state Essential Health Benefit benchmark plans**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Resuming benchmark plan reviews would allow Illinois to innovate and add value to the coverage residents buy in the individual market.
  - **Issue:** HHS review and approval of applications to change State Benchmark Plans — which set covered services in states' individual markets — is paused because of administrative inaction and potential new rulemaking.
  - **Action Requested:** Resume review and approval.

Financial Regulation and Consumer Protection

- **Withdraw the OCC and FDIC's proposed Community Reinvestment Act rule changes**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Approximately 99% of Illinois-chartered banks have assets under $10 billion, so the proposed CRA rule would essentially eliminate lending transparency for 99% of them. It would also misalign the Illinois CRA with the federal CRA, confusing Illinois banks and potentially requiring the Division of Banking to hire an Illinois CRA trainer at a cost of more than $125,000.
  - **Issue:** The OCC and FDIC have proposed sweeping changes to their rules implementing the Community Reinvestment Act (12 U.S.C. 2901 et seq.). Expanding qualifying community development activity outside a bank's assessment area would let banks earn a Satisfactory rating without serving surrounding communities; eliminating the requirement to create, retain, or improve jobs for low- and moderate-income communities would worsen local stagnation and limit small business growth and access to housing and jobs; and the rules would end transparency of small business, small farm, and community development lending at most state-chartered banks.
  - **Action Requested:** The agencies should withdraw the proposal. As a backstop, Congress should enact legislation preventing implementation.

- **Restore consumer complaint narratives on the CFPB's public website**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Restoring CFPB complaint narratives would restore a key tool for detecting misconduct and recovering money for harmed Illinoisans;

private parties also use the narratives to enforce consumer laws, reducing the burden on regulators.

  - **Issue:** The CFPB removed consumer complaint narratives from its public website. IDFPR's Division of Financial Institutions (DFI) receives far fewer complaints than the CFPB and has used those narratives to identify misconduct — particularly unlicensed activity — and to launch investigations seeking restitution for Illinois consumers.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore publication of complaint narratives (with consumer consent). As a backstop, Congress should require it by amending 12 U.S.C. 5534.

- **Remove the CFPB's new barriers to filing consumer complaints**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** CFPB barriers that leave consumer complaints unaddressed reduce DFI's ability to spot misconduct and could push large numbers of complaints to DFI, which is not equipped to handle them.
  - **Issue:** The CFPB now requires multiple points of contact information and requires consumers to complain to certain companies before the CFPB will mediate.
  - **Action Requested:** Remove these barriers. As a backstop, Congress should amend 12 U.S.C. 5534 to prohibit requiring consumers to complain to respondents before filing with the CFPB.
- **Preserve the Management component of CAMELS bank and credit union ratings**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Management is a critical factor in evaluating a financial institution's risk and safe-and-sound operation. Diverging federal and state examination standards would also create friction between federally chartered and state-chartered credit unions.
  - **Issue:** In May 2026, the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC) proposed revising the Uniform Financial Institutions Rating System ("CAMELS") — continuing federal banking agencies' efforts to de-emphasize supervisors' qualitative evaluation of management. NCUA has also moved away from full risk ratings in credit union examinations.
  - **Action Requested:** Withdraw the FFIEC proposal and return NCUA to full risk ratings. As a backstop, Congress should restrict federal regulators from reducing the prominence of the Management component.
- **Restore NCUA examiner staffing and joint examinations**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** As NCUA has withdrawn from joint examinations, DFI has had to assume full responsibility for examinations, a substantial burden on an already short-staffed team, and the dropped specialized examinations create new risks.

- **Issue:** Consistent with cuts at other federal regulators, NCUA has reduced staff and withdrawn from joint examinations, and no longer examines certain targeted and specialized areas.
- **Action Requested:** Restore NCUA management and examiner staffing and return to prior levels of examination participation and oversight, with congressional funding as needed.

Natural Resources

- **Resume and fully fund the Brandon Road Interbasin Project**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Completing the Brandon Road project protects the Great Lakes — the world's largest freshwater system — and its fishing industry and ecology, a shared U.S.–Canada interest.
  - **Issue:** The Army Corps of Engineers has issued a work stoppage order on the Brandon Road Interbasin Project, a complex multi-state and international project to stop invasive carp — even as biologists have found young invasive carp may be closer to the Great Lakes than previously thought.
  - **Action Requested:** Rescind the stoppage order and resume all engineering and construction to completion. Congress should direct the Corps to do so and fund the entire project to completion.

B. LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Tariffs Refunds and Consumer Relief

- **Pass legislation to return unlawful tariff payments and deliver relief to consumers**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** The Supreme Court struck down President Trumps' tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, but working families have not received any direct payment for the higher costs paid. Governor Pritzker has called for $1700 in relief per Illinois household – approximately $8.7 billion statewide.
  - **Issue:** Illinois working families paid more for everyday essentials, while farmers and small businesses faced higher costs and disrupted markets. Congress needs to return money to consumers, who ultimately shouldered the higher costs.
  - **Action Requested:** Pass the Tariff Refund Act of 2026 to require refunds of unlawfully collected tariffs, with interest, within 180 days of enactment. Pass the Tariff Relief for Consumers Act to require large corporations receiving refunds to demonstrate how they will deliver corresponding relief through lower prices or rebates with a focus on household essentials. Establish meaningful Congressional review of sweeping tariffs to prevent another round of unlawful taxes on working families.

Federal Grant Integrity

- **Enact statutory protections for federal grant recipients**

- **Overview in Illinois:** Statutory grant protections would lock in the stable, predictable funding Illinois and its community partners need to plan and deliver services.
- **Issue:** The proposed 2 C.F.R. 200 rewrite (described under Executive Actions above) exceeds statutory authority and undermines Congress's power of the purse. Even if withdrawn, nothing in statute prevents a future rewrite.
- **Action Requested:** Repeal or block the proposed OMB rules through appropriations riders or the Congressional Review Act and restore the prior Uniform Guidance. Enact statutory provisions requiring objective grant termination standards, meaningful appeals, reimbursement of closeout costs, rank-order award decisions based on objective peer review, and protection of award agreements from arbitrary cancellation.

Public Finance

- **Preserve the tax exemption for municipal bonds and private activity bonds**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** More than 50,000 governmental entities nationwide use tax-exempt bonds, including Illinois villages, library districts, cities, counties, water authorities, the Illinois Tollway, and the State. By a back-of-the-envelope estimate, losing the exemption could cost the State an additional $150 million in interest on every billion it issues — and the State sometimes issues more than $3 billion a year. In FY 2025, IFA issued approximately $2.4 billion in tax-exempt bonds for 27 conduit borrowers with Illinois facilities. Retirees, pension funds, and every investor holding municipal bonds — directly or through a bond fund or 401(k) — also benefit.
  - **Issue:** Federal tax law periodically faces proposals to eliminate the tax exemption for municipal bonds under Section 103 of the Internal Revenue Code, which is often cited as an offset for tax cuts. The exemption for private activity bonds was considered as an offset for H.R. 1 in 2025; the final law preserved it, but the threat recurs.
  - **Action Requested:** Oppose any change eliminating or limiting the tax exemption for municipal bonds, including private activity bonds.
- **Make nuclear energy facilities eligible for tax-exempt private activity bond financing**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Tax-exempt bond eligibility would help finance development of new nuclear facilities in Illinois.
  - **Issue:** Consistent with Executive Order 2026-01 (Executive Order to Accelerate New Safe Nuclear Power Generation in Illinois), Illinois seeks lower-cost financing for new nuclear generation.
  - **Action Requested:** Amend the Internal Revenue Code, following the structure Congress used for qualified carbon dioxide capture facilities (§ 142(a)(17), § 142(o), § 146(g)(6)):

        - add § 142(a)(18), "qualified nuclear energy facilities," as exempt facility bonds;
        - add § 146(g)(7), excluding 75% of any such issue from the private activity bond volume cap (so only 25% counts against the state cap); and
        - add § 142(p), defining a "qualified nuclear energy facility" as any facility or property used for the generation, production, conversion, transmission, storage, or other beneficial use of energy derived from nuclear fission, fusion, or other nuclear processes, including functionally related property.

- **Reinstate advance refunding of municipal bonds**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Advance refunding would let Illinois municipalities, conduit borrowers, and taxpayers lower debt service costs.
    - **Issue:** The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 eliminated advance refunding — a widely used tool for refinancing debt before the optional redemption date when interest rates fall.
    - **Action Requested:** Reinstate tax-exempt advance refunding.

Health Insurance

- **Repeal H.R. 1's restrictions on Marketplace subsidies for lawfully present immigrants**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Repealing Sections 71301 and 71302 would restore access to coverage for thousands of Illinois residents.
    - **Issue:** Sections 71301 (effective January 2027) and 71302 (effective January 2026) of H.R. 1 restrict premium tax credits and cost-sharing reductions for various categories of lawfully present immigrants, effectively putting coverage out of reach.
    - **Action Requested:** Repeal Sections 71301 and 71302.
- **Repeal H.R. 1's removal of tax-liability protections for premium tax credit recipients**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Repealing Section 71305 would restore protection against surprise tax bills for approximately 285,000 Illinoisans.
    - **Issue:** Section 71305 of H.R. 1, effective beginning in tax year 2026, removes the ACA's long-standing caps on how much low-income premium tax credit recipients can owe when their credits are reconciled at tax time.
    - **Action Requested:** Repeal Section 71305.
- **Repeal H.R. 1's pre-enrollment verification requirement**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Repealing Section 71303 would reduce administrative burdens and prevent coverage delays for approximately 285,000 Illinois residents.

- **Issue:** Section 71303 of H.R. 1, effective January 2027, requires enrollees to submit verification documents to the Marketplace every year before they can apply the premium tax credits they are eligible for — delaying coverage and access to care, including lifesaving treatments and prescriptions.
- **Action Requested:** Repeal Section 71303.

- **Allow states to enforce Medicare Advantage standards**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** State enforcement authority would let IDOI resolve consumers' Medicare Advantage problems directly instead of referring them to the federal government.
  - **Issue:** Federal law preempts state enforcement of Medicare Advantage (MA) plan standards. IDOI receives numerous MA complaints every year but has no authority to act.
  - **Action Requested:** Authorize states to enforce existing federal MA standards.

Workforce

- **Reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Without dedicated Wagner-Peyser funding, IDES's ability to deploy reemployment strategies for unemployment claimants and coordinate with WIOA partners would shrink, and state staff would be reduced across multiple units.
  - **Issue:** WIOA — the umbrella law for four federal workforce programs, including Wagner-Peyser/Title III (IDES), Title I (DCEO), Title II adult education (ICCB), and Title IV vocational rehabilitation (IDHS/DRS) — was last reauthorized in 2014, leaving outdated policy in federal law.
  - **Action Requested:** Reauthorize WIOA through an open, transparent process, including designated funding for basic Wagner-Peyser services (labor exchange, employment services, business services, and labor market information) and new flexibility on infrastructure funding requirements to allow hybrid, virtual, mobile, and other service delivery models.

- **Reauthorize the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Since the WOTC expired, DOL has instructed states to keep accepting but not process verification requests. Without reauthorization, future DOL grants are unlikely and IDES would have to shut down the unit that helps employers verify eligibility.
  - **Issue:** Congress let the WOTC expire on December 31, 2025. For more than 30 years, with bipartisan support, it has encouraged employers to hire veterans, the long-term unemployed, TANF and SNAP recipients, people with incarceration histories, and youth. Congress has previously reauthorized it late and retroactively.

- **Action Requested:** Reauthorize WOTC, retroactively.

- **Set national standards and provide funding for enhanced wage records**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Expanding wage record collection requires IT, program, and policy changes at IDES, at a cost, but would greatly improve the state's ability to plan, measure the impact of interventions, and conduct research across workforce, education, and benefits programs.
  - **Issue:** Employer wage reporting is limited to the data elements needed to administer unemployment benefits. States need more data (such as hours worked and occupation), reported more frequently, to meet federal performance and reporting requirements in workforce and education programs — including Workforce Pell.
  - **Action Requested:** Provide federal funding and a statutory or regulatory directive setting national standards so employers report consistently across states.

Innovation and Economic Development

- **Pass the National Quantum Initiative Reauthorization Act (S. 3597)**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois has been a large recipient of National Quantum Initiative programs and is positioned to benefit from reauthorization and expansion. The Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park supports the bill; Senator Durbin is an original cosponsor.
  - **Action Requested:** Reauthorize existing National Quantum Initiative programs and create new ones to accelerate quantum technology development and applications vital to national security and competitiveness.

- **Pass the Build to Scale Reauthorization Act (S. 5198)**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois organizations have shown significant interest in earlier Build to Scale rounds. Since 2014 the program has awarded more than $272 million to 426 projects across all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico, supporting more than 58,600 jobs and 6,200 startups.
  - **Action Requested:** Reauthorize EDA's Build to Scale program through FY 2030.

- **Pass the Biobased Materials Investment and Production Act (H.R. 8137)**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** The Biobased Materials Investment and Production Act would benefit East Central Illinois, its legacy industry and farmers, and the connected "Ag Tech Corridor." The iFAB Tech Hub supports the bill; Representative Budzinski is an original cosponsor.
  - **Action Requested:** Establish tax incentives for domestic biomanufacturing facilities and renewable materials made from U.S.-grown biomass.

Supplier Diversity and Procurement

- **Authorize state supplier inclusion programs on federally funded projects**

- **Overview in Illinois:** Federal authority for state supplier inclusion programs would increase participation of underrepresented businesses, reduce duplication for vendors and agencies, and expand opportunity in communities historically excluded from public contracting.
- **Issue:** Federal procurement rules often preempt state equity requirements; states lack clear authority to apply aspirational goals, certification requirements, and utilization standards to federally funded projects.
- **Action Requested:** Authorize states to apply supplier participation goals and utilization standards to federally funded projects without preemption concerns; require federal agencies to recognize state Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and Veteran Business Program (VBP) certifications; and permit states to extend certification and utilization standards to federal pass-through dollars (transportation, infrastructure, broadband, and higher education).

- **Remove federal procurement barriers for small and diverse vendors**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Procurement reforms would create a more competitive procurement environment, greater participation of small and diverse Illinois firms, and more transparency in public spending.
  - **Issue:** Federal thresholds, bonding requirements, and contract structures disproportionately burden small and diverse businesses.
  - **Action Requested:** Modernize federal micro-purchase thresholds, bonding requirements, and insurance minimums; expand authority to unbundle large contracts; and require federal agencies to publish utilization data by race, gender, disability, and veteran status.

Financial Regulation and Consumer Protection

- **Narrow federal preemption to protect state-chartered institutions and their customers**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Narrowing federal preemption would remove a competitive disadvantage for Illinois-chartered institutions and ensure consumers have the same protections regardless of charter.
  - **Issue:** Dodd-Frank limits preemption to state laws that prevent or discriminate against national banks or significantly interfere with their federal powers. The OCC and NCUA have contravened that limit with sweeping claims that many state consumer protection laws are preempted, disadvantaging state-chartered institutions and stripping consumer protections from customers of national banks and federal associations.
  - **Action Requested:** Amend the National Bank Act, the Home Owners' Loan Act, and similar laws to heighten and clarify requirements before the OCC and NCUA may declare preemption; alternatively, let each state "opt in" to federal preemption when a federal regulator adopts a final rule for national banks.

- **Stop high-interest lenders from buying banks to evade state rate caps**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois' Predatory Loan Prevention Act (2021) caps many loans at 36% APR, but banks are exempt. Without action, predatory lenders could lend in Illinois in defiance of the cap.
    - **Issue:** High-interest lenders such as Enova and OppFi are buying or merging with banks — which are exempt from state rate caps — to offer high-interest loans nationally.
    - **Action Requested:** Restrict the OCC's authority to approve bank purchases by companies with a history of high-interest predatory lending, and amend the Depository Institutions Deregulation and Monetary Control Act (DIDMCA) so that out-of-state state-chartered banks are subject to the interest rate cap of the consumer's state when that state opts out of "home state" rate exportation.
- **Oppose Section 301 of the Main Street Capital Access Act (H.R. 6955)**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Weakening the Management component of CAMELS could lead to more bank failures and riskier practices, and would let banks score well without adequate community investment.
    - **Issue:** Section 301 would amend CAMELS to undermine examiners' ability to assess the quality of bank management — one of the two most important determinants of a bank's safety and soundness, and the one regulators can influence. It would also remove "demonstrated willingness to serve the legitimate banking needs of the community" from the criteria.
    - **Action Requested:** Oppose Section 301. CAMELS is a supervisory tool that needs flexibility and should not be written into statute.
- **Oppose the Earned Wage Access Consumer Protection Act (H.R. 9330)**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** H.R. 9330 would block Illinois from developing stronger regulation of earned wage access products, which have been described as modern payday loans.
    - **Issue:** H.R. 9330 would create a weak national regulatory scheme for earned wage access products — which charge flat fees for small, short-term advances that amount to high APRs — remove them from existing consumer protection frameworks, and limit the information consumers receive.
    - **Action Requested:** Oppose H.R. 9330.
- **Amend the Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA) to recognize disparate impact liability**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Recognizing disparate impact liability in ECOA would restore the ability of IDFPR's Divisions of Banking and Financial Institutions to examine institutions for ECOA compliance under the Illinois Community Reinvestment Act.

- **Issue:** In April 2026 the CFPB amended Regulation B (12 C.F.R. Part 1002) and took other steps to disclaim disparate impact liability under ECOA; the FTC followed with an August 14, 2026 policy statement disclaiming disparate impact liability under ECOA and Section 5 of the FTC Act. Until this year, ECOA was widely understood — including in Regulation B, FTC enforcement, and case law — to cover disparate impact.
- **Action Requested:** Amend ECOA to explicitly recognize disparate impact liability.

- **Let the federal ban on intoxicating hemp take effect**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Children can buy unlicensed, untested intoxicating hemp products at gas stations, corner stores, and smoke shops; children and adults in Illinois have overdosed or been sent to the ER. Continued sales also undercut Illinois' licensed cannabis businesses and the social equity businesses at the core of its cannabis industry.
  - **Issue:** The continuing resolution signed November 12, 2025 (H.R. 5371) defined intoxicating hemp (more than 0.4 mg total THC per package for a consumer product, and 0.3% total THC) and banned it effective November 12, 2026. A continuing resolution delayed the ban to December 11, 2026.
  - **Action Requested:** Oppose any further delay and any further amendment; let the ban take effect, and do not further regulate or legalize intoxicating hemp.

Gaming

- **Prohibit nationwide prediction markets on sports, elections, and events, and affirm state authority**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Affirming state authority over prediction markets would protect Illinois' regulated gaming system and its consumers.
  - **Issue:** Unregulated or loosely regulated prediction markets operate in a legal and financial gray area that blurs the line between speculative gambling and financial derivatives, causing major conflicts, risks, and economic disruption.
  - **Action Requested:** Prohibit nationwide prediction markets and event contracts on sports, gambling, politics and elections, current events, pop culture, and other non-traditional instruments; make clear that states have exclusive regulatory authority over them; and bar the CFTC and other federal agencies from regulating them.

- **Give problem gambling a federal home**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Federal funding authority for problem gambling would share the cost of gambling disorder services that Illinois now carries largely alone.
  - **Issue:** Gambling disorder is the only recognized addiction with no federal agency responsible for funding, coordinating, or overseeing services, leaving states to finance treatment, research, and prevention. Unlike suicide prevention — for

which Congress created the 988 network in statute in October 2020 — gambling has two competing national helpline numbers whose routing depends on voluntary state cooperation.

- **Action Requested:** Create permanent funding authority under the Public Health Service Act for SAMHSA grants to states, tribes, and tribal organizations for problem gambling prevention, screening, assessment, intervention, and treatment; and designate and fund a single national gambling helpline with routing and answer-rate standards, or fold gambling into 988.

Agriculture and Natural Resources

- **Allow year-round, nationwide E15**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois is the nation's second-largest corn producer. Year-round E15 could raise ethanol demand by 4.5 billion gallons between 2021 and 2035 — 1.5 billion additional bushels of corn demand — giving certainty to farmers facing shrinking foreign markets due to tariffs. About 5,000 retail locations sell E15 nationally, with 1,200 more projected, concentrated in the Midwest. The delayed 2025 waiver cost the Illinois Fuel and Retail Association's 500-plus members tens of millions of dollars and raised consumer prices by as much as 30 cents a gallon; downstate markets such as Peoria, Champaign, and southern Illinois face a double hit of higher production and transportation costs.
  - **Issue:** The 1990 Clean Air Act amendments granted a summer Reid Vapor Pressure (RVP) waiver for gasoline with 10% ethanol (E10) but never extended it to higher blends — even though E15 has lower evaporative emissions and NREL found in 2012 that the RVP effect of 15% ethanol is indistinguishable from 10%. EPA extended the waiver administratively in 2019, but the D.C. Circuit reversed it. Emergency waivers are unstable: the 2026 waiver did not issue until March 25, took effect May 1, and initially ran only through May 20 before continuing in short increments. State-by-state fixes are no substitute; Ohio has already reversed its own petition.
  - **Action Requested:** Amend the Clean Air Act to extend the RVP waiver to blends up to 15% ethanol, permitting year-round nationwide sale. Pending enactment, EPA should: (1) issue the seasonal emergency waiver by March 1 each year; (2) pair any E15 waiver with identical treatment for E10; and (3) issue waivers for the full summer season.
- **Pass a comprehensive Farm Bill with conservation funding**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** A comprehensive Farm Bill would give Illinois agriculture and conservationists clarity on grants and assurance that set-aside lands remain protected for multiple uses; IDNR has benefited from conservation funding in past Farm Bills.
  - **Issue:** A full Farm Bill has not passed since 2018.
  - **Action Requested:** Pass a comprehensive Farm Bill that includes conservation funding for landowners and farmers.

- **Hold Illinois harmless on federal grants in the Shabbona Lake land transfer**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** A statutory exemption would let IDNR fulfill the intent of Public Act 103-1078.
    - **Issue:** Public Act 103-1078 directs IDNR to transfer Shabbona Lake State Recreation Area to the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation — but only if the transfer does not violate federal funding restrictions or grant terms or require repayment or replacement land. Two federal grants (National Park Service and Department of the Interior) are at issue, and the governing laws do not allow repayment to be waived.
    - **Action Requested:** Enact a statutory exemption from repayment if the land is placed in reservation status by the Nation.
- **Allow passport numbers in place of Social Security numbers for recreational licenses**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Accepting passport numbers would increase sporting tourism revenue in Illinois.
    - **Issue:** Under 42 U.S.C. § 663, used to locate parents and children in custody and child-abduction enforcement, states track Social Security numbers on every license application, including hunting and fishing licenses — barring visiting foreign nationals from obtaining them.
    - **Action Requested:** Amend 42 U.S.C. § 663 to allow states to accept passport numbers as an alternative.
- **Pass the Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission Act of 2025 (H.R. 1514 / S. 1078)**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** The Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission would bring together 31 states and federal partners to coordinate economic development, research, and action on invasive species.
    - **Issue**: If the bill fails to pass, the Mississippi River Basin would remain managed under MICRA and ad-hoc partnerships, which some see as fragmented and inefficient leading to potential expansion of invasive species in our waterways.
    - **Action Requested:** Support and cosponsor legislation, introduced by Representatives Mike Ezell (R-MS) and Troy Carter (D-LA), creating a federal commission within the Department of the Interior to coordinate fisheries management, conservation, and economic development across the Mississippi River basin, at an estimated federal cost of approximately $245 million.

C. PROGRAM FUNDING

Workforce and Labor Market Information

- **Fully fund Unemployment Insurance administration grants**

- **Overview in Illinois:** UI administration shortfalls threaten claims adjudication, call-center and in-office service, fraud prevention, UI modernization, and employer audits and collections that support the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund — and Illinois' ability to meet federal performance metrics.
- **Issue:** USDOL has proposed flat FFY 2027 funding — in effect a cut. Federal awards fell $36.2 million short of actual administrative costs in FFY 2024 (including above-base funding) and $57.8 million short in FFY 2025, and the gap is expected to grow.
- **Action Requested:** Increase UI administration funding to cover actual costs.

- **Increase funding for Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) cooperative programs**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Losing even one IDES analyst could jeopardize accurate monthly jobs data (CES) and local unemployment statistics (LAUS); staff losses in QCEW and OEWS would reduce data accuracy and increase suppressed occupational data.
  - **Issue:** BLS programs have received flat or lower funding with no reduction in requirements; in the most recent award year, expenses exceeded the federal award by nearly $600,000.
  - **Action Requested:** Increase BLS program funding.
- **Sustain WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth funding**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois received $177,138,559 in FY 2026 to support job centers, training providers, and community partners statewide.
  - **Action Requested:** Maintain WIOA formula funding.
- **Sustain the DOL Apprenticeship Expansion Program**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois received $6,665,343 in FY 2026 ($1.6 million formula; $5 million competitive). Cuts would likely reduce employer participation and worsen skilled-worker shortages in manufacturing, health care, and construction.
  - **Action Requested:** Maintain funding.
- **Sustain Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois received $1,235,357 in FY 2026.
  - **Action Requested:** Maintain funding for TAA, which provides training and income support to workers who lose jobs because of foreign trade.

Small Business and Economic Development

- **Fund Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) and release awards on time**

- **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois received $1,098,500 in FY 2025 for centers statewide that provide confidential guidance, training, and resources to start-ups and existing businesses.
- **Issue:** The SBA has repeatedly delayed SBDC awards and reimbursements, citing vague IT issues or legally questionable conditions, and the administration has signaled interest in eliminating or "consolidating" the program.
- **Action Requested:** Maintain SBDC funding and ensure appropriated funds reach recipients without unreasonable or inappropriate delays or conditions.

- **Deliver Illinois' full State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) allocation**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois has received $230,005,719.46 of its $354,626,570 allocation (64.86%), including a second disbursement of $121,327,564 in February 2025. SSBCI helps small businesses attract capital and expand.
  - **Action Requested:** Ensure delivery of the remaining SSBCI allocation.
- **Sustain the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois received $36,968,724 in FY 2026 to address the causes and conditions of poverty — including for people experiencing homelessness, migrants, and older adults — through employment, education, housing, nutrition, and emergency services.
  - **Action Requested:** Maintain CSBG funding.
- **Sustain the Manufacturing Extension Partnership**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** IMEC, Illinois' MEP recipient, received $5,811,299 in FY 2026. In 2025 it supported more than 3,700 companies, helped create or retain 6,871 jobs, and generated more than $905 million in economic impact.
  - **Issue:** The administration has threatened to close the program.
  - **Action Requested:** Maintain MEP funding.
- **Fully fund APEX Accelerators**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois received $1,327,267 in FY 2026 to help businesses compete for government contracts, including national-security work.
  - **Action Requested:** Maintain at least level funding for DOD Procurement Assistance / APEX Accelerators.

Water Infrastructure

- **Provide stable or increased State Revolving Fund capitalization grants**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** IFA issued $500 million in new-money tax-exempt SRF bonds in 2025, which have so far provided $438 million in low-interest Illinois EPA loans to 132 local governments for drinking water and wastewater projects.

- **Issue:** FY 2026 appropriations (P.L. 119-74) provide $3.04 billion for EPA water infrastructure programs, including the Drinking Water and Clean Water SRFs. Recent appropriations have earmarked portions of this funding for specific projects, shrinking the SRF funding available nationwide.
- **Action Requested:** Provide stable or increased SRF capitalization grants.

Innovation

- **Sustain EDA Regional Technology and Innovation Hubs**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois partner organizations received $51.5 million in FY 2025 and $30 million in FY 2026. Illinois is home to two EDA-funded Tech Hubs: iFAB and the Bloch.
  - **Action Requested:** Maintain Tech Hubs funding.
- **Sustain NSF Regional Innovation Engines**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois partners received $15 million in FY 2025 and $45 million in FY 2026, including implementation funding for the Great Lakes Water Innovation Engine led by Current.
  - **Action Requested:** Maintain Regional Innovation Engines funding.
- **Sustain defense and innovation programs**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Defense and innovation programs support Illinois' quantum, biomanufacturing, and small business innovation sectors.
  - **Action Requested:** Maintain funding for DOD Office of Strategic Capital programs; the DOD Distributed Bioindustrial Manufacturing Program; DARPA's Quantum Benchmarking Initiative and Heterogeneous Architectures for Quantum program; and the SBIR and STTR programs.

Agriculture

- **Restore full reimbursement for Talmadge-Aiken meat and poultry inspections**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Reduced Talmadge-Aiken reimbursement puts IDOA's status as a Talmadge-Aiken state at risk, threatening the small and midsized plants that serve producers and support rural jobs.
  - **Issue:** Under a cooperative agreement with USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, IDOA inspects federal plants when USDA lacks inspectors, with reimbursement of "up to 50%." The rate has dropped to 39%.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore full reimbursement.
- **Restore Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) staffing**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** IDOA relies on APHIS during animal disease outbreaks, with avian influenza still affecting flocks and New World Screwworm moving north from Mexico. In October 2025, two Illinois APHIS Plant Protection and

Quarantine offices furloughed all employees, forcing IDOA to absorb their workload to keep plant products moving.

- **Issue:** From January 2025 to January 2026, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service lost 2,009 employees — 23% of its workforce — who protect agriculture against invasive pests and diseases and certify the health of U.S. exports.
- **Action Requested:** Fund APHIS to restore staffing.

PUBLIC SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, AND INFRASTRUCTURE

A. EXECUTIVE ACTIONS

Public Safety and Emergency Management

- **Base disaster declarations and assistance on measurable need — never on how a state voted**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** A proposed quadrupling of FEMA's Public Assistance threshold would raise Illinois' threshold from $24.8 million to about $100 million, putting federal Public Assistance out of reach for all but the most catastrophic Illinois disasters. Further, thresholds for Individual Assistance remain unclear. A guarantee of nonpartisan aid would protect every Illinois community regardless of who holds the White House.
    - **Issue:** FEMA's decisions on Individual Assistance lack specific, transparent thresholds. Recent proposals would quadruple state and local thresholds for Public Assistance, which would raise Illinois' damage-cost threshold from $24.8 million to about $100 million. And states have no guarantee that disaster aid will not be withheld for political reasons.
    - **Action Requested:** FEMA should adopt more specific and transparent thresholds for Individual Assistance decisions and should not drastically increase state and local Public Assistance thresholds. Congress should guarantee that disaster relief is awarded by objective need and is never withheld to punish states based on partisanship or political considerations.
- **Do not shift unfunded emergency management responsibilities to the states**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Holding FEMA to its responsibilities would prevent an unfunded transfer of federal disaster costs to Illinois and its local governments.
    - **Issue:** The FEMA Review Council has issued numerous recommendations. It remains unclear how far they will be implemented, but it is clear that FEMA seeks to shift programmatic responsibilities and their cost to the states.
    - **Action Requested:** FEMA should not use "reform" as justification to limit assistance eligibility or cut support under the guise of shifting programs to the states. Any streamlining must preserve existing emergency management frameworks.
- **Withdraw CMS's proposed cap on Ground Emergency Medical Transport supplemental payments (CMS-2449-P)**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Withdrawing the GEMT cap would protect reimbursement for Illinois fire-based EMS agencies serving Medicaid patients.
    - **Issue:** A pending CMS rule would cap Ground Emergency Medical Transport (GEMT) supplemental Medicaid payments at Medicare Ambulance Fee Schedule

rates — eliminating the gap-filling function GEMT was designed to serve for fire-based EMS agencies that treat Medicaid patients.

- **Action Requested:** CMS should withdraw or modify the rule. As a backstop, Congress should pass statutory language preserving GEMT supplemental payment authority above Medicare rates, or direct CMS to withdraw or modify the rule.

Infrastructure

- **Keep Buy America requirements for EV chargers at 55%**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Keeping the Buy America requirement at 55% preserves the ability to expand EV charging in both urban and rural Illinois communities without unnecessary waiver burdens on federal and state officials.
  - **Issue:** The Trump Administration has made several attempts to hold up EV infrastructure deployment. The latest: FHWA is considering raising Build America, Buy America (BABA) requirements so that 100% of all components of federally funded manufactured products — including EV charging stations — must be made in the United States, up from at least 55% of the total cost of components. No charging manufacturer can meet a 100% requirement, so every project would need a waiver.
  - **Action Requested:** FHWA should keep the requirement at the 55% level established under federal law. As a backstop, Congress can require OMB and DOT to treat EV charging equipment like any other manufactured product nationwide.
- **Approve project labor agreements on federally funded projects**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Project labor agreements are a tool Illinois uses to deliver federally funded projects on time with a skilled workforce.
  - **Issue:** Since the start of the Trump Administration, FHWA has not approved any project labor agreements (PLAs) nationwide other than for a couple of projects in Minnesota and for New York State Department of Transportation.
  - **Action Requested:** FHWA should resume approving PLAs. As a backstop, Congress should affirm that states may use PLAs on federal projects.
- **Allow diversity, equity, and inclusion to be considered in federal grant applications**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Lifting the block on DEI considerations would restore full participation by Illinois governments and partners in federal grant programs.
  - **Issue:** From the outset, the Trump Administration has blocked DEI considerations in the federal grant process. Federal grant and loan contracts now contain intrusive language that recipients fear could force them to turn over sensitive information, including employees' immigration status. The result is a chilling effect on DEI efforts and on participation in federal grant programs by governments and private entities alike.

- **Action Requested:** Remove the block on DEI considerations and the intrusive contract language. As a backstop, and as part of broader depoliticization of federal funding, Congress could state specifically that DEI may be considered in federal grant applications.

Environment and Energy

- **Reinstate $19.9 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for Illinois carbon management projects**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Reinstating the $19.9 million would support safe carbon sequestration and protect groundwater resources for nearly 2 million Illinois residents.
  - **Issue:** Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for Illinois carbon management projects has been cut.
  - **Action Requested:** Reinstate the $19.9 million.
- **End the Department of Defense's de facto ban on new wind power**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** DOD's halt on wind project reviews has stalled 5,000 MW and $9 billion of wind investment in Illinois (30,000 MW and $50 billion nationally).
  - **Issue:** DOD must review wind projects for potential effects on radar and other national security systems. That review was routine for years, but since 2025 DOD has refused to review projects or sign mitigation agreements — effectively halting every onshore wind project nationwide that had not already cleared that stage of permitting.
  - **Action Requested:** DOD should resume routine reviews and mitigation agreements. Congressional Democrats have attempted to include legislation forcing DOD to act quickly; Congress should enact it.
- **Stop using emergency powers to keep uneconomic coal plants running**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Limiting Section 202(c) orders would protect Illinois ratepayers from the cost of propping up uneconomic, high-pollution plants.
  - **Issue:** Section 202(c) of the Federal Power Act lets the Secretary of Energy temporarily direct the operation of the electricity system during emergencies. The Department of Energy has begun using this authority to keep coal plants running that their owners scheduled to close because they are uneconomic — forcing electricity customers to pay for plants that are too expensive to operate, often need extensive and costly repairs, and produce dramatically more pollution than other fossil plants.
  - **Action Requested:** DOE should stop issuing these orders which raise electricity rates. As a backstop, Congress could specify limitations on Section 202(c) emergency powers.

B. LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

Homeland Security and Critical Infrastructure

- **Protect the integrity of risk-based homeland security grants**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Risk-based allocation would ensure Illinois' homeland security funding tracks its actual risk.
    - **Issue:** Illinois and the Chicago urban area saw significant reductions in homeland security grant funding in 2025 and 2026 despite no change in risk profile — inconsistent with statutory requirements.
    - **Action Requested:** Congress should require FEMA to allocate homeland security grant funds strictly through transparent, risk-based criteria; prohibit tying security grants to compliance with unrelated federal policies; and establish stable, multi-year performance periods so states can plan investments strategically.
- **Reauthorize and fund the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Reauthorizing and funding the SLCGP would sustain cybersecurity support for Illinois state and local governments.
    - **Issue:** The State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program (SLCGP) provides essential funding and in-kind support for state and local cybersecurity. The PILLAR Act (Protecting Information by Local Leaders for Agency Resilience Act, H.R. 5078), which would extend authorization through 2033, passed the House and is pending in the Senate as the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program Reauthorization Act. No additional appropriations have been made.
    - **Action Requested:** The Senate should pass the reauthorization, and Congress should appropriate funds for the program.
- **Reauthorize the Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards program**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois has a high number of chemical-using industries. State law informs residents about chemical risks but does not require preventive security measures. Without federal reauthorization of CFATS, Illinois would have to consider building its own chemical security program, requiring new authority, resources, and staff.
    - **Issue:** The Chemical Facility Anti-Terrorism Standards (CFATS) program required high-risk chemical facilities to adopt physical and cybersecurity measures, backed by federal inspections, to keep dangerous chemicals from being stolen, misused, or weaponized. Congress let the program's authority lapse in 2023, leaving high-risk sites uninspected and ending federal identification of new high-risk facilities and vetting of people seeking access to hazardous chemicals. H.R. 4470, the Protecting and Securing Chemical Facilities from Terrorist Attacks Act of 2023, passed the House 409–1 on July 26, 2023, but was blocked by Senator Rand Paul.
    - **Action Requested:** Reauthorize CFATS.

- **Establish a National Critical Lifeline Resilience Grant Program**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** A National Critical Lifeline Resilience Grant Program would harden the systems Illinois communities depend on most during emergencies.
    - **Issue:** Nationally significant critical infrastructure and community lifeline systems provide broad public benefits but lack sufficient economic incentives for resilience investment.
    - **Action Requested:** Create a competitive grant program prioritizing projects that reduce cascading risks across transportation, energy, water, communications, emergency services, and other essential sectors — with emphasis on infrastructure whose national security and economic value exceeds what owners or operators can fund through traditional revenue.
- **Enact a comprehensive digital protection framework: privacy, AI safety, and sustainable data centers**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** A federal digital protection framework that builds on state leadership would protect Illinois residents and communities without overriding Illinois' own leadership.
    - **Issue:** Digital technologies are central to the economy and national security, but there is no comprehensive federal framework protecting individuals and ensuring digital infrastructure serves the public interest.
    - **Action Requested:** Congress should establish a framework that:
        - **Strengthens data privacy** through a durable federal privacy law that protects Americans' personal data while preserving legal certainty for international commerce, cross-border data transfers, and U.S. competitiveness;
        - **Establishes national AI safety standards** — consistent federal requirements for AI risk assessment, testing, monitoring, and accountability that build on state leadership; and
        - **Promotes sustainable digital infrastructure** by requiring energy- and water-efficient data centers, including geothermal cooling and other zero-emission technologies.
- **Create a technology transfer pathway for states to use FFRDC tools**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** A technology transfer pathway would reduce duplication and improve risk assessment and infrastructure protection across Illinois.
    - **Issue:** States cannot easily access the advanced models and analytical tools that Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs) use to assess critical infrastructure risks, cyber threats, hazardous materials, and natural disasters, so they pay separately for similar capabilities.

- **Action Requested:** Create a federal technology transfer pathway giving states access to existing taxpayer-funded tools, with data protections ensuring states retain control of sensitive data.

Transportation

- **Fund Illinois' infrastructure needs in the next surface transportation bill**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** The BUILD Act's cuts threaten Illinois priorities in EV charging, rail, and transit.
  - **Issue:** IIJA's multiyear funding lapsed in September 2026. The BUILD Act, passed by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, would, compared to the IIJA authorization baseline over five years:
    - cut public transit investment by $16.5 billion (–14%), including $14.0 billion of guaranteed funding;
    - cut passenger rail investment by $48.7 billion (–43%) and provide no guaranteed rail funding;
    - cut and consolidate IIJA's carbon reduction, resilience, and EV formula programs into other highway formula programs; and
    - eliminate competitive grants for climate and community projects, including Reconnecting Communities, EV Charging and Fueling Infrastructure, Bike-Ped programs, and Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities.
  - **Action Requested:** Continue the IIJA-created programs slated for repeal or consolidation and guarantee multiyear transit and rail funding so state DOTs can keep building a safer, more equitable, climate-resilient network.
- **Restore electric vehicle and battery tax credits**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Restoring EV and battery tax credits would support Illinois manufacturing and give drivers relief from volatile gas prices.
  - **Issue:** The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and IIJA jump-started U.S. EV adoption and manufacturing in competition with China. H.R. 1 eliminated the EV tax credits, chilling investment in domestic manufacturing and removing consumer incentives at a time of significant gasoline price volatility caused by the ongoing Iran War.
  - **Action Requested:** Re-establish the IRA tax credits for EV consumers and for vehicle and battery manufacturers.
- **Stop the cancellation of transportation grants over "agency priorities"**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Statutory limits on grant cancellations would restore predictability to Illinois project delivery.

- **Issue:** Since the start of the Trump Administration, OMB and USDOT have paused, cancelled, and disrupted projects in Illinois and nationwide based on "changing administration priorities" — including cancelling millions in funding for Illinois over the inclusion of bike infrastructure.
- **Action Requested:** Congress should:
  - provide that the Secretary may not terminate, withhold, or delay execution of a grant agreement on the basis that it no longer effectuates "agency priorities" (language included in the BUILD Act);
  - remove the grant-agreement requirement for more funding streams (a top AASHTO priority); and
  - require 30 days' advance notice of any award or grant agreement cancellation.

Environmental Protection

- **Amend the Clean Air Act to expressly authorize EPA to regulate greenhouse gases**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Express authority to regulate greenhouse gases would restore EPA's ability to address climate change and give states, industry, and communities regulatory certainty.
  - **Issue:** The Trump Administration is arguing in court that greenhouse gas regulation is not required, so that it can remove carbon pollution standards for vehicles and power plants.
  - **Action Requested:** Amend the Clean Air Act to expressly authorize greenhouse gas regulation and, through this and other measures, prevent EPA from abdicating its responsibility to protect Americans from dangerous pollution.
- **Amend the Clean Water Act to require EPA to complete its PFAS biosolids risk assessment**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Completing the PFAS biosolids risk assessment would enable Illinois to protect the groundwater and drinking water of its 12.5 million residents.
  - **Issue:** The Trump Administration has walked back proposed PFAS standards and research into PFAS as a class of pollutant.
  - **Action Requested:** Require EPA to complete its PFAS biosolids risk assessment.
- **Amend RCRA to require regulation of legacy coal ash disposal sites**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Regulating legacy coal ash disposal sites would protect groundwater for more than 19 million Americans from coal ash ponds.
  - **Action requested:** Amend the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act to require EPA to regulate legacy coal combustion residual (CCR) disposal sites.

- **Amend CERCLA to require Superfund lead cleanups to meet state public health standards**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Requiring Superfund lead cleanups to meet state standards would reduce lead exposure risk for approximately 4 million Americans.
    - **Action Requested:** Require Superfund lead cleanups to meet applicable state public health standards.

Climate and Clean Air Programs

- **Reauthorize the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant program**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois received $450 million through the one-time CPRG program for freight electrification, clean buildings, and sustainable agriculture. Continued funding would strengthen climate resilience for nearly 150 million Americans in climate-vulnerable communities.
    - **Issue:** CPRG was a one-time IRA program.
    - **Action Requested:** Reauthorize CPRG and, through this and other programs, increase funding to reduce climate pollution and the risks Illinois is already paying for.
- **Create a financing program for zero-emission school buses**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Zero-emission school bus financing would reduce children's exposure to diesel emissions and improve air quality for the more than 25 million students who ride school buses daily.
    - **Action Requested:** Establish a new federal financing program for zero-emission school buses.
- **Renew the Clean Ports Program under the Clean Air Act**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois received $95 million under the one-time Clean Ports program to help ports switch to low-emission vehicles and equipment. Continued funding would improve air quality for more than 40 million Americans living near ports and freight corridors.
    - **Issue:** Clean Ports was a one-time program.
    - **Action Requested:** Establish a renewed Clean Ports Program.
- **Establish a DOE Industrial Electrification and Energy Efficiency Program**
    - **Overview in Illinois:** A DOE industrial electrification program would improve air quality and cut emissions in Illinois' industrial communities.
    - **Issue:** Industrial emissions are a major contributor to climate change and to the heat, storms, flooding, and air pollution affecting Illinois communities, and they are difficult to reduce without federal leadership.

- **Action Requested:** Create a new DOE program to accelerate cleaner manufacturing.

Clean, Affordable Water

- **Make the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program permanent**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** The pandemic-era Water Assistance Program prevented nearly 1 million disconnections and restored service to more than 100,000 households; making LIHWAP permanent would help vulnerable Illinoisans keep affordable water.
  - **Issue:** The Water Assistance Program was created with pandemic aid and was not made permanent.
  - **Action Requested:** Permanently establish LIHWAP for households below 200% of the federal poverty level, with a focus on children under five, seniors, and people with disabilities.
- **Create a Lead Service Line Replacement program within the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** A dedicated Lead Service Line Replacement program would accelerate replacement of lead service lines serving nearly 9 million households, more than 10% of them in Illinois.
  - **Action Requested:** Establish a dedicated Lead Service Line Replacement funding program in the DWSRF, and through this and other programs ensure communities keep clean water without drastic rate hikes.
- **Create a Great Lakes State Implementation Compact Grant under the Clean Water Act**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** A Great Lakes State Implementation Compact Grant would benefit the 30 million people who depend on the Great Lakes.
  - **Action Requested:** Create the grant to support interstate water quality initiatives.
- **Create a federal private well protection program**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** A federal private well program would protect the nearly 43 million Americans who rely on private wells.
  - **Issue:** Private wells are less regulated than community water systems.
  - **Action Requested:** Create a program supporting routine testing, remediation, and treatment.
- **Require a national framework for microplastics**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** A national microplastics framework would strengthen protections for more than 200 million Americans served by public drinking water and wastewater systems.

- **Issue:** Microplastics are an emerging, dangerous pollutant not always captured by existing regulatory and treatment systems.
- **Action Requested:** Require EPA to establish standardized analytical methods, a national monitoring program, and wastewater financing for microplastics.

- **Expand environmental workforce programs under the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, and Safe Drinking Water Act**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Expanded workforce programs would train the next generation of drinking water, wastewater, and environmental professionals.
  - **Issue:** Workforce shortages are limiting water system capacity.
  - **Action Requested:** Expand workforce development programs under all three statutes.

- **Create a coal ash remediation and orphan-site cleanup fund**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** A coal ash remediation and orphan-site cleanup fund would protect groundwater for more than 19 million Americans.
  - **Action Requested:** Create a fund to help states address abandoned coal ash sites.

Clean Energy

- **Restore the clean energy, home efficiency, and rooftop solar tax credits**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** The renewable industry estimates that 50–60% of the new clean energy capacity needed to meet rising demand could be lost without the 48E, 45Y, 25C, and 25D credits — capacity that holds down Illinois energy bills.
  - **Issue:** H.R. 1 phased out the Clean Energy Investment (48E) and Production (45Y) tax credits for wind and solar with strict, nearly immediate deadlines most projects cannot meet, and eliminated the home energy efficiency (25C) and rooftop solar (25D) credits.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore these IRA tax credits.

- **Remove H.R. 1's "prohibited foreign entity" barriers to clean energy projects**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Removing the prohibited foreign entity requirements would lower the cost of energy infrastructure and, ultimately, energy bills.
  - **Issue:** H.R. 1 bars renewable projects from tax credits if they use components from prohibited foreign entities, which the Trump Administration has defined expansively. Because other countries manufacture many clean energy components, the rule hits renewables and storage especially hard — and it stacks with new tariffs on clean energy components and transmission hardware such as transformers and substations.
  - **Action Requested:** Remove the prohibited foreign entity requirements.

- **Support interregional transmission**

- **Overview in Illinois:** Improved interregional transmission would make low-cost Great Plains wind more available, speed interconnection, and improve reliability.
- **Issue:** Regional Transmission Organizations have little incentive to improve connections between regions, making it hard to move power — including between northern and southern Illinois.
- **Action Requested:** Provide new rounds of grant funding for interregional transmission projects or direct RTOs to collaborate more closely.

- **Reauthorize the Weatherization Assistance Program through 2030, including the Readiness Fund**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Weatherization saves families an average of $372 a year and supports approximately 8,500 jobs; Readiness Fund barriers affect 19% of applicants. Illinois has $280 million in FY 2026 WAP funding obligated (including $133 million from BIL/IIJA and $130 million in HOMES funding), delivered through 37 local agency grantees; a funding pause could idle as many as 2,000 local agency employees.
  - **Issue:** WAP received critical FY 2026 funding, but executive orders pausing federal infrastructure disbursements complicated its reappropriation and created uncertainty just as the program approached statutory expiration. Under a funding freeze, the nonprofit agencies that deliver WAP, LIHEAP, and CSBG must pause operations, immediately shutting down services to low-income residents.
  - **Action Requested:** Reauthorize WAP through 2030, with robust funding for the Weatherization Readiness Fund, which addresses barriers such as asbestos or faulty wiring that would otherwise disqualify a home.

C. PROGRAM FUNDING

Public Safety

- **Sustain or increase Emergency Management Performance Grants**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** EMPG sustains the local agencies that plan for, respond to, and coordinate recovery and mitigation for disasters in Illinois.
  - **Issue:** Illinois has seen only minor reductions in EMPG over the past three years, but its disaster risk has risen with increasing tornadoes and severe storms, extreme heat, and growing energy demand.
  - **Action Requested:** Expand EMPG to increase direct funds to state and local emergency management agencies.

- **Protect and fully fund AFG and SAFER fire grants**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** AFG and SAFER grants protect fire departments statewide, especially small, rural, and volunteer departments.
  - **Issue:** Proposed cuts and processing delays for Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grants

jeopardize staffing and protective equipment, especially for small, rural, and volunteer departments. Demand far exceeds available funding.

- **Action Requested:** Set statutory funding floors that the executive branch cannot unilaterally reduce and consider a dedicated grant stream to replace PPE with PFAS-free equipment.

- **Restore U.S. Fire Administration and National Fire Academy funding**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** USFA's national fire data collection and NFA's free training give Illinois the data it uses to track fire trends and target prevention, and the no-cost national training pipeline many Illinois departments depend on.
  - **Issue:** Funding lapses and DHS reorganization have disrupted USFA's national data collection and NFA programming. Proposed cuts threaten the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS) and free NFA training.
  - **Action Requested:** Oppose cuts and protect these programs from shutdowns.
- **Restore Homeland Security Grant Program and UASI funding to at least FFY 2024 levels**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Between FFY 2024 and FFY 2025, Illinois received approximately $2.1 million less in SHSP funding, and Chicagoland UASI funding was cut by approximately $26 million.
  - **Issue:** The Homeland Security Grant Program — including the State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) and Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) — was dramatically reduced between FFY 2024 and FFY 2025, and the trend continued in the FFY 2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity.
  - **Action Requested:** Reverse these cuts and restore funding to at least FFY 2024 levels.
- **Reverse cuts to Project Safe Neighborhoods**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** From FFY 2025 to FFY 2026, PSN funding fell from $118,000 to $89,000 in the Central District and from $78,000 to $67,000 in the Southern District.
  - **Issue:** Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) brings together federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement, prosecutors, and community partners to develop data-driven strategies targeting the people, networks, and organizations driving violent crime. Illinois State Police's PSN funding has been reduced.
  - **Action Requested:** Reverse the cuts.
- **Expand counter-drone funding and training**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Expanded C-UAS funding and training would let Illinois field effective defenses against a growing and complex drone threat.

- **Issue:** Federal law now authorizes state law enforcement such as the Illinois State Police to develop counter-drone (C-UAS) capabilities, but limited funding restricts purchases of detection and mitigation technology, and access to required federal training is limited by federal capacity. The forthcoming $250 million Counter-UAS Grant Program does not meet the true cost or demand, and recent allocations targeted states hosting FIFA World Cup matches, leaving Illinois without resources commensurate with its size and need.
- **Action Requested:** Increase funding for C-UAS technology and expand federally recognized training availability, including a train-the-trainer pathway.

- **Restore federal funding for the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** With MS-ISAC now fee-based, Illinois partners, including Cook County, pay high fees individually for support that was previously free.
  - **Issue:** Federal cuts eliminated MS-ISAC's no-cost cybersecurity intelligence and services. MS-ISAC moved to a fee-based model, and states cannot use federal grants to pay for memberships, creating uneven access.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore federal funding to re-establish nationwide information sharing. Senator Warner introduced the Guaranteeing Universal Access to Cybersecurity Act (S. 4699) on June 8, 2026.

Transportation Safety

- **Fully fund and timely deliver FRA and PHMSA safety and inspection programs**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Full and timely FRA and PHMSA funding sustains Illinois' rail and pipeline safety inspections.
  - **Issue:** The Federal Railroad Administration funds state railroad crossing and hazardous materials inspections, and PHMSA funds state natural gas pipeline inspections. There have been no cuts, but there have been delays, and PHMSA reimbursement — while within federal parameters — is at a reduced level.
  - **Action Requested:** Fully fund these programs and deliver funds on time.

Environment

- **Restore $3 billion and re-establish EPA's Office of Research and Development**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Re-establishing EPA's Office of Research and Development would strengthen the science behind environmental protections for communities nationwide.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore funding and re-establish the office that evaluated pollutants, protections, and programs.

- **Restore $100 million for the EPA–DOE Federal Technology Assistance Program**

- **Overview in Illinois:** Restoring the $100 million would improve carbon sequestration permitting and protect drinking water for nearly 2 million Illinois residents.
- **Action requested:** Restore the funding.

- **Restore dedicated funding for federal environmental justice programs**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Restored environmental justice funding would support underserved Illinois communities.
  - **Action Requested:** Restore EJ funding so EPA can expand technical assistance, civil rights enforcement, and grants for underserved communities.
- **Provide at least $52 million a year for EPA's Class VI carbon sequestration program**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Funding the Class VI program at no less than $52 million a year would strengthen scientific review, improve permitting efficiency, and ensure safe long-term geologic carbon storage while keeping Illinois groundwater safe.
  - **Action Requested:** Fund the program at no less than $52 million annually.
- **Increase Brownfields assessment and cleanup funding**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Increased Brownfields funding would accelerate redevelopment of contaminated properties and long-term community revitalization.
  - **Action Requested:** Increase federal Brownfields funding, including support for a state Brownfields grant program.
- **Provide at least $500 million for PFAS destruction, remediation, and air emissions research**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** PFAS research and remediation funding would reduce long-term PFAS exposure.
  - **Action Requested:** Fund PFAS destruction technologies, remediation methods, and air emissions research at no less than $500 million.

Energy

- **Fund LIHEAP at no less than $4.2 billion a year and restore its staffing**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Illinois received $194,089,520 in regular LIHEAP funding in FY 2027. Currently 10,000 Illinois households a week receive LIHEAP help with gas and electric bills, including households that would otherwise be disconnected; a funding lapse during winter or summer would endanger lives.
  - **Issue:** Average U.S. electricity prices rose 15% between 2022 and 2026, outpacing inflation, yet federal LIHEAP reaches fewer than 20% of eligible

families. The Trump Administration has cut program staffing, keeping money Congress appropriated away from families.

  - **Action Requested:** Authorize an annual appropriation of no less than $4.2 billion for LIHEAP and ensure full federal staffing.

- **Fund an additional round of the DOE State Energy Program**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Another round of State Energy Program funding would expand state energy resilience projects, accelerate proven technologies, and lower consumer energy costs.
  - **Action Requested:** Authorize another round of State Energy Program funding.
- **Fund state preparedness for advanced nuclear reactors**
  - **Overview in Illinois:** Federal preparedness support would improve federal–state coordination and ensure Illinois communities are ready before new reactors arrive.
  - **Issue:** As advanced and small modular reactors move toward deployment, states need emergency response capabilities in place first.
  - **Action Requested:** Provide states timely access to NRC and DOE technical expertise, planning information, hazard assessments, training resources, and preparedness funding.