



Laborers' International Union of North America

Midwest Regional Office

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Illinois Legislative Update

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ELECTION REVIEW

Interest in this year's mid-term elections spiked nationwide and Illinois' voters were no different. That interest was shown at polling places and courthouses around the state over the last 6 weeks of early voting and on Election Day. With tens of thousands of ballots still in the mail or unreported at this time, voter turnout is on pace to exceed the total of the 2014 governor's election by 20%. This surge in voter turnout carried Democrats to a clean sweep of Illinois' five statewide offices, super-majority control of both the Illinois House and Senate and the capture of two congressional seats.

Governor

LIUNA-supported candidate for governor **J.B. Pritzker (D-Chicago)** crushed the unpopular Rauner by a 14% margin, one which is likely to grow as more votes are counted. Pritzker won or is leading at this time in 15 of Illinois' 102 counties. He padded a nearly 800,000 vote cushion in Chicago's Cook County and the two basically split the rest of the state's vote down the middle. Pritzker returned the traditionally Democrat Downstate counties of Alexander, Fulton, Rock Island and St. Clair to the fold. He also won or is leading in the homes of three of the state's universities – Champaign, DeKalb and Jackson counties – and in Knox, Peoria and five of the six suburban Chicago counties.

Rauner will likely see a slight drop-off from his 2014 vote total, but Pritzker is on pace to receive at least 700,000 more votes than **Gov. Pat Quinn (D)** received both four and eight years ago, a clear indication that Democrats were highly motivated this year. Third party candidates **Sam McCann (Conservative-Jacksonville)** and **Grayson Kash Jackson (Libertarian-Antioch)** are receiving only 4.3% and 2.4% of the vote, respectively.

Other Statewide Offices

All other Democrats running statewide are doing at least as well as Pritzker at this time. Attorney General candidate **Kwame Raoul (D-Chicago)** won a surprisingly decisive, but contested victory over **Erika Harold (R-Urbana)** 54%-43%, longtime **Secretary of State Jesse White (D)** will likely approach Hillary Clinton's vote total of 3 million from 2016 and **Comptroller Susana Mendoza (D)** and **Treasurer Mike Frerichs (D)** received 59% and 57% of the vote.

Illinois House

Every seat in the Illinois House of Representatives was up for election yesterday and more races than usual were contested. Illinois Democrats started the day with 67 of the 118 seats in the House and ended it with – at least – 72; that number may grow as mail-in ballots are received and counted.

House Democrats traded seats with the GOP Downstate, regaining a seat based in LaSalle County they long held, but lost in 2016. Union member **Lance Yednock (D-Ottawa)(IUOE)** defeated **Rep. Jerry Long (R-Streator)** 55%-45%. On the downside, the pattern of losses continued in deep southern Illinois with the defeat of **Rep. Natalie Phelps Finnie (D-Harrisburg)** in the 118th district. Massac County State's Attorney **Patrick Windhorst (R-Metropolis)** easily outdistanced the recently-appointed Phelps Finnie, 57.6%-42.4% in a district that supported **Donald Trump (R)** in 2016 with more than 70% of the vote. All other Downstate seats stayed in the same hands with the closest race involving another appointed House member, **Rep. Monica Bristow (D-Alton)**, who defeated **Mike Babcock (R-Bethalto)** by only 284 votes.

Two other candidates with union ties came close to unseating GOP incumbents. Both **John Curtis** (IFT) and **Jake Castanza** (son of a retired LiUNA 32 business manager) both secured more than 47% of the vote in their respective races in western Illinois and in the Rockford area.

As downstate Illinois becomes more conservative with each passing election, the Democrats are offsetting those losses by gaining ground in the suburban Chicago area – and then some. Their majority grew with one win in suburban Cook County, three in what historically has been the Republican stronghold of DuPage County and a minimum of one more in north suburban Lake County. Another race in Lake has the candidates separated by only one vote. Mail-in ballots will determine the outcome of that race and possibly others.

Illinois Senate

Only 2/3 of Illinois State Senate seats were up for election and, due to a lack of challengers, Democrats were assured of a majority of 30 seats, with several other districts being Democrat-dominated. Like their House counterparts, Senate Dems expanded their existing 37-22 majority with wins in the suburbs. As it stands, they will grow their cushion to, at least, 39-18 with two DuPage County seats still too close to call. The Democrat leads in one of those races by 284 votes and the other trails by a mere 12 votes. Again, mail-in ballots will determine the final outcomes.

Downstate, the status quo was maintained with Republican **Sen. Neil Anderson (R-Moline)** defeating AFSCME member **Gregg Johnson (D-E. Moline)** by less than 1% of the vote and Democrat **Sen. Andy Manar (D-Bunker Hill)** easily besting **Seth McMillan (R-Taylorville)** 56%-44%. In the race to fill the seat of retiring **Sen. Bill Haine (D-Alton)**, **Rachelle Crowe (D-Glen Carbon)** cruised to a win over Edwardsville Mayor **Hal Patton**, 58%-42%. Patton, a Republican, saw his campaign complicated by the fact that he was thrown off the ballot and had to run under a new Downstate United “party.” In another seat opened up by retirement, **Chris Belt (D-Belleville)** coasted to a 59%-41% victory to replace **Sen. James Clayborne (D-E. St. Louis)** in St. Clair County.

U.S. Congress

As in the Illinois General Assembly, congressional Democrats gained two seats in the formerly Republican-dominated Chicago suburbs, with incumbent **U.S. Rep. Randy Hultgren (R-Plano)** losing his 14th CD seat, which covers part of DeKalb County, to **Lauren Underwood (D-Naperville)** by 4% of the vote. There are now 13 Democrats and five Republicans in Illinois’ congressional delegation. All five GOP-held seats are Downstate. Two of those districts were in doubt until the end.

Cong. Rodney Davis (R-Taylorville) held off a strong and expensive challenge from **Betsy Dirksen Londrigan (D-Springfield)**, 51%-49%. **U.S. Rep. Mike Bost (R-Murphysboro)** overcame strong support for St. Clair County State’s Attorney **Brendan Kelly (D-Swansea)** in the Metro East with even stronger support in southern Illinois for a 51.7%-45.2% victory with a Green Party candidate taking the remainder of the vote.