

Statehouse Briefing Excerpt

By Joe Schatteman, Deputy Legislative Director, Illinois Municipal League

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House Bill 1562 (Rep. Demmer, R-Dixon) compels counties and municipalities to establish a local finance & audit committee. This committee may be comprised of members of the corporate authorities or other officials or members of the public. Counties and municipalities may establish a new committee, use an existing committee or establish a committee of the whole to meet this requirement. The committee shall be required to review and inspect the treasurer's book, bank accounts and any other financial transactions. In addition, the committee shall review the audit and management letter. The intention of this legislation is to add an additional safeguard in an attempt to prevent government fraud. The IML worked with Rep. Demmer, the Illinois Municipal Treasurer's Association and the Illinois Government Finance Officers to craft this legislation and remove the most onerous provisions. This legislation passed the House unanimously and now goes to the Senate for their consideration.

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SB1689 (Sen. Biss, D-Evanston) abolishes local electoral boards (municipalities, townships and community college districts) transfers the powers and duties to the county electoral boards. The primary duty of local electoral boards is to determine if an objection to a nomination petition is valid and the consequence of that determination. This legislation was approved by the Senate Executive Committee. The IML opposes this legislation based on the fact that this legislation takes away local control from municipalities. In addition, the IML is aware of some of the controversial decisions made by these local boards and the claim that these decisions are purely political. However, this legislation would not address this concern. Transferring this decision making authority from one political body to another political body would not necessarily take a political bias out of the decision making process. The bill is on the Senate Floor for their consideration.

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The House unanimously approved HB 1555 (Rep. Cross R-Oswego and Rep. Sandack R-Downers Grove) on Wednesday. The bill as introduced would have required local governments to provide a multitude of new information to the state for inclusion on the Illinois Transparency and Accountability Portal (ITAP). The IML believed the initial bill was overly burdensome, so we worked with Leader Cross and Representative Sandack to substantially reduce the reporting requirements. The bill as amended basically requires ITAP to provide direct access to documents many local governments already compile and forward to state officials such as the Comptroller and the Treasurer. In addition to those reports, it also includes reports regarding pension data that is typically compiled by either IMRF or local police and fire pension boards. The language of the bill does not address whether it is State officials' office, pension boards or the unit of local of government that will be required to provide the required information to ITAP. We appreciate the willingness of Leader Cross and Representative Sandack to work with IML on this issue and substantially reduce the reporting obligations that were included within the original bill. The bill is being sponsored by Senator Dillard in the Senate.

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