

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 13, 2020

## **Statement from Speaker Madigan**

**CHICAGO** – House Speaker Michael J. Madigan released the following statement Wednesday:

“The COVID-19 pandemic has presented an unprecedented crisis for our state and forced us all to find a new normal. For several weeks, members of the Illinois House have been working together in a bipartisan fashion to navigate this new landscape. Democrats and Republicans have worked virtually to continue discussion on myriad issues before the General Assembly, carefully balancing the business of the state while keeping the health and safety of members, staff and the public paramount.

“I have always been certain that especially in times of crisis, the important work of the General Assembly must continue. In consultation with Governor Pritzker, Senate President Harmon, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and other stakeholders, the Illinois House will convene a special legislative session starting Wednesday, May 20 for a minimum of three days.

“The House will gather at the Bank of Springfield Center under an IDPH-approved plan that includes comprehensive safety measures to protect members, staff and the public. We’ve chosen this venue to better allow for the recommended health and social distancing measures outlined by IDPH. With more space than provided at the Capitol building, we can preserve medically guided public access to House proceedings while working to ensure members, staff and the public are at least 6 feet apart at all times. The special session will be open to the public in a limited capacity under the direction and enforcement of the Illinois State Police. The special session will be livestreamed in its entirety at [www.ilga.gov](http://www.ilga.gov).

“We will focus our efforts on passing essential legislation that protects our most vulnerable residents, including a responsible state budget that prioritizes all Illinoisans and provides some stability for our state’s economy. Earlier today, I sent Leader Durkin an IDPH-approved pledge that I am asking all House Democrats to sign committing ourselves to specific health precautions we will take upon a return to Springfield. I have asked Leader Durkin to request his caucus commit to the same IDPH-approved pledge and the same precautions to ensure we protect the health and safety of members, staff, the public and our communities.

“I recognize there are many other important issues and initiatives that need the General Assembly’s attention. Members will continue to work diligently on those issues in order to take them up at a time when we can ensure members, staff and the public can again safely gather in a regular legislative session.

“The magnitude of the crisis that the COVID-19 pandemic has presented to our state is immense. Across Illinois, communities are grappling with outbreaks, tragic loss of loved ones, and significant changes to our daily life. The financial impact has also been great, with historic levels of unemployment impacting everyone from factory workers to small business owners but hitting hardest those who have the least ability to afford it.

“People across Illinois have stood together, stayed home, raised money for those in need, saluted our first responders and essential workers and saved lives. Under Gov. Pritzker’s leadership, House Democrats are ready to work with our Republican colleagues to deal with this unprecedented crisis and enact critical legislation to protect all Illinois residents and provide support and help they will need in the weeks and months ahead.”

Speaker Madigan’s letter to Leader Durkin, the COVID-19 pledge, IDPH guidelines and a full plan to convene a special session of the Illinois House can be found below.

###

Hon. Jim Durkin  
House Republican Leader  
316 Capitol Building  
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Leader Durkin:

I write to inform you that after consultation with Senate President Harmon, Governor Pritzker's office and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), House Democrats are ready to convene a special session to conduct the critical work of state government in this unprecedented pandemic.

While we work on these important issues, House Democrats are committed to taking comprehensive steps to ensure the health and safety of our members and the communities to which they will return.

Toward that end, I am sharing an IDPH-approved pledge that I have signed and will be asking every member of the House Democratic Caucus to sign committing us to a series of IDPH-approved precautions that we will take upon a return. Given your enthusiasm to resume normal operations of the House and the uncertainty of these times, I ask that you request the same of your members and encourage them to sign a similar pledge and commit themselves to these precautions.

This IDPH-approved pledge and our commitment are done in the best interest of the health, safety, and wellbeing of our colleagues, staff, and the constituents we represent. Below is a snapshot of the precautions we are committing to take. These recommendations come from medical experts are designed to ensure health and safety is a top priority.

- Getting tested for COVID-19 in the days before the House is to resume – even if we are asymptomatic or have recovered from a previous infection. If we test positive, we will stay home and self-quarantine.
- Undergoing a temperature check on session days prior to entering the Capitol or any other grounds used to convene session. If we record an elevated fever, we will undergo a new test prior to entering the building.
- Wearing a facemask at all times when in session and whenever in the company of colleagues and staff. We understand additional protective equipment may be required if recommended by experts, and we commit to using it. *(Cloth face coverings will be provided to members and essential staff who need it.)*
- Traveling to session alone and staying in a hotel or apartment on our own, including doing our best to travel without spouses, children and other family members.

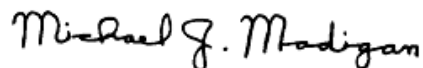
- Avoiding any unnecessary exposure by refraining from extracurricular activities like non-essential meetings, gatherings, shared meals or drinks with colleagues, lobbyists, or others while in session.
- Following social distancing recommendations at all times while in Springfield for the business of the House.
- Upon returning home, we will seek another test for COVID-19 and/or self-quarantine for at least seven days.
- Taking any additional individual precautions necessary to contribute to the health and safety of those around us.

We are all looking forward to a return to some semblance of normalcy – and certainly, as legislators, we are particularly interested in resuming normal operation of the House – but we must also recognize that these are not normal times. A pandemic is not swayed by our speeches, by our desire for normalcy, or by political expediency. But as we all acknowledge, social distancing and medically guided precautions have saved lives.

As we look ahead to conducting the essential operations of the General Assembly amid this uncertainty, it is my hope that we continue standing together and taking all steps necessary to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of our colleagues, staff, and communities.

With kindest personal regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Madigan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

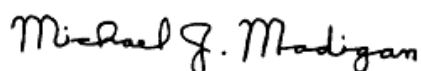
**MICHAEL J. MADIGAN**  
Speaker of the House

In the interest of conducting the necessary business of the Illinois House of Representatives in a manner that prioritizes the health and safety of our fellow members, staff, and our communities at large, we do hereby pledge to follow the recommendations as approved by the Illinois Department of Public Health by:

- Getting tested for COVID-19 in the days before the House is to resume – even if we are asymptomatic or have recovered from a previous infection. If we test positive, we will stay home and self-quarantine.
- Undergoing a temperature check on session days prior to entering the Capitol or any other grounds used to convene session. If we record an elevated fever, we will undergo a new test prior to entering the building.
- Wearing a facemask at all times when in session and whenever in the company of colleagues and staff. We understand additional protective equipment may be required if recommended by experts, and we commit to using it. (*Cloth face coverings will be provided to members and essential staff who need it.*)
- Traveling to session alone and staying in a hotel or apartment on our own. Including doing our best to travel without spouses, children and other family members.
- Avoiding any unnecessary exposure by refraining from extracurricular activities like non-essential meetings, gatherings, shared meals or drinks with colleagues, lobbyists, or others while in session.
- Following social distancing recommendations at all times while in Springfield for the business of the House.
- Upon returning home, we will seek another test for COVID-19 and/or self-quarantine for seven days. Taking any additional individual precautions necessary to contribute to the health and safety of those around us.

We commit to taking these and additional precautions recommended by medical experts so that we may convene as safely as possible at a time when each of our personal wellbeing is so dependent on the precautions taken by those around us.

In taking the precautions stated above, we commit to do our part to prevent the spread of COVID-19, protect our colleagues, staff, and our communities, and help save lives.



**MICHAEL J. MADIGAN**  
Speaker of the House

## Illinois House of Representatives – COVID-19 Special Session Plan

This document describes the preparation for and conduct of special session for the House while the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a significant health hazard and large gatherings of people are being discouraged. This plan pulls from guidance issued by the Department of Public Health, which is informed by experts from FEMA, the CDC, and other medical advice.

Furthermore, this plan was developed in consultation with the Office of the Architect of the Capitol, the Secretary of State's Office, including the Capitol Police, the Illinois State Police, both Democrat and Republican members of the House, and bipartisan legislative staff. This plan is designed to ensure the health and safety of legislators, legislative staff, other support personnel, and the public.

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### 1) In advance of session:

- a. Members will be asked to indicate their willingness to follow the public health and safety guidelines established by medical experts by signing a pledge.
- b. Travel to Springfield should be done individually, in one's own vehicle. Public transportation, car-pooling, and ride-sharing should be avoided.
- c. Individual hotel rooms should be utilized – those who typically share accommodations should stay in hotel rooms instead.
- d. Members and staff should be tested for COVID-19 in the days before the House is to resume, even if asymptomatic or recovered from a previous infection. Any member or staff who tests positive or feels ill should remain home, consult with a healthcare professional and self-quarantine.
- e. Those who are at higher risk for serious illness from COVID-19 should consider not traveling to Springfield for session.
- f. Members should refrain from bringing companions to Springfield, including spouses and children.

### 2) Entry into the BoS Center:

- a. Security on site will be provided by the Illinois State Police.
- b. Members and staff will have access to the parking garage to the northwest of the building.
- c. Members and staff will enter the north side of the lobby for admittance to the floor level; members of the public will enter the south side of the lobby for admittance to the mezzanine level.

- d. Entry into the building, for all persons, will include passing through a magnetometer to prohibit weapons; this process of entry into the building will be overseen by law enforcement personnel.
- e. All persons entering the building must submit to a touchless temperature check; those with a temperature of 100°F or higher must leave and should submit to a test for COVID-19. Anyone testing positive should consult with a healthcare professional and self-quarantine.
- f. Signage will advise individuals of the common symptoms of COVID-19; those who are experiencing those symptoms or have been in close contact with someone experiencing them should return home, consult with a healthcare professional and self-quarantine.
- g. All persons admitted into the building must wear a face covering at all times. Cloth masks will be provided to members and staff.
- h. Law enforcement will limit the number of members of the public allowed in the building, based on the available area to seat and monitor them.

### 3) Protocols inside the BoS Center:

- a. Members will be arranged on the floor level, using individual, 6 ft. tables configured in a manner similar to the House floor, around a podium and well area.
- b. A limited number of staff will be physically present at both the BoS Center and the Capitol Complex. All other staff will continue to work remotely.
- c. Members of the public will be arranged on the mezzanine level, in a configuration that permits social distancing and in an area that can be sufficiently monitored, based on law enforcement guidelines.
- d. Members of the media will have access to a location above the floor, on the mezzanine level; they will be asked to create a pool to minimize the number of people physically present.
- e. Sanitation stations will be placed at key locations.
- f. Janitorial staff will be engaged in a robust sanitizing practice multiple times a day, with special attention to door handles, hand railings, and other frequently-touched surfaces.

### 4) Conduct of Session

- a. Committees, if needed, will occur on the House floor area. Members who do not serve on the committee may stay to observe, but are not required to be present at that time.
- b. As many microphones as possible will be placed throughout the floor for members to approach and access.

- c. The Clerk will conduct roll call voting, with a program that will allow the votes to be displayed on a screen. Members' laptops will be able to access [ilga.gov](http://ilga.gov) to review the legislation, and staff analyses will be pre-loaded. No other browsing will be permitted on the laptops.
  - d. In addition to coverage through the press, LIS will live stream the proceedings on [ilga.gov](http://ilga.gov).
- 5) Additional points of information:
- a. Access to the Capitol and Stratton Buildings are currently limited to the north doors only.
  - b. No members of the public are currently permitted in the Capitol and Stratton Building, unless visiting the district offices on the first floor and escorted by the member or staff.
  - c. Members will have access to their offices if needed; however, most staff will continue to work remotely.
  - d. DPH recommends all meetings, such as committee pre-meetings, caucuses, and negotiation sessions for bills, should be conducted via phone or video conferencing system in advance, if possible.
  - e. Information regarding the operational status of area hotels and restaurants will be provided.
- 6) Upon adjournment, DPH recommends social distancing and isolation for at least 7 days post legislative session.

In spite of the preparations and precautions being taken to protect the health and safety of members, staff, and the public, all in attendance must remain vigilant. All measures being recommended by medical experts, such as maintaining 6 ft. of distance from others and frequent hand-washing should continue to be practiced.



## **IDPH Guidance for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19** **Illinois General Assembly Returning to Session:**

This document provides guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) to the General Assembly members and staff in response to the rapid spread of COVID-19 in Illinois. The intention of these recommendations are to safeguard legislators, legislative staff, other support personnel and the public.

### **Travel and Stay in Springfield:**

- Public transportation and ridesharing should be used when no other means of transportation are possible. If possible, legislators and staff should drive themselves.
- Legislators or staff who typically share a residence or a hotel room in Springfield must use individual hotel rooms or housing in order to continue the practice of safe social distancing.
- If a legislator or staff member is feeling ill, they should NOT travel to Springfield for session.
- Members of a vulnerable population should consider not traveling to Springfield for session.
- If a legislator or staff member has a serious underlying medical condition, they should NOT travel to Springfield for session.

### **Entering and Working in Buildings Intended for Conducting State Business:**

- The Secretary of State (“SOS”) or other security personnel must screen all those entering the Capitol Complex or a building intended for conducting state business for a temperature of 100F degrees or greater and/or other COVID-19 related symptoms.
- Face coverings must be worn at all times, even when social distancing protocols are being followed. Face coverings can be items such as a bandanna, scarf, mask, etc. Face coverings will be provided to members and staff who do not bring their own.
- If a legislator or staff member is feeling ill, they should NOT enter the Capitol or other venue intended for conducting state business. If a legislator or staff member becomes ill or symptomatic while in Springfield, they should call their doctor, a nurse hotline, any telehealth hotline set up specifically for COVID-19, or an urgent care center. If they are experiencing symptoms, they should return home and follow the guidelines provided by their physician.
- SOS or other staff shall have a robust sanitizing practice for the Capitol Complex or other building intended for conducting state business, with special attention paid to door handles, elevator buttons, and other frequently touched surfaces.
- Public access to the common areas at the Capitol Complex should be limited and follow social distancing guidelines.
- Staff working in the Capitol should stay in their workspaces as much as possible or continue to work remotely. If Capitol staff need to report to work, staffs’

workspaces should be six feet apart. Face coverings should continue to be worn at all times.

**In- Person Floor Debates and Voting:**

- Each desk or voting station should be sanitized regularly.
- Members should be arranged so they are six feet away from the next member. Utilizing all available additional space may be necessary.
- Face coverings must be worn at all times, even while speaking to or debating a legislative issue.

**In- Person Committee Hearings and Voting:**

- All meetings, such as committee pre-meetings, caucus meetings, and negotiation sessions, should be conducted via phone or video conferencing system in advance.
- Witnesses who want to testify are advised to provide written testimony in advance that can be read into the record (rather than in person).
- Witnesses who wish to provide in-person, oral testimony must wear a face covering at all times. Witness table settings must be sanitized after every testimony provided.
- Members of the public who seek to engage with the democratic process are advised to do so by live streaming or engaging with their legislator by means of communication that include emails, telephone, or by filing an electronic witness slip.

**Upon adjournment:**

- IDPH recommends social distancing and isolation for at least seven days post legislative session.