8 - February 6, 2019

Capitol Recap: \$15 minimum wage is first major legislation of 101st

By Capitol News Illinois

Illinois Senate Assistant Majority Leader Kimberly Lightford, a Maywood Democrat, said the chamber is ready to push ahead with a bill to increase the state's minimum hourly wage from \$8.25 to \$15 over an undefined period of years.

The only rate structure mentioned at a Senate Labor Committee hearing on Wednesday, Jan. 30, was a \$1 increase to the \$8.25 rate for each of the next six years, then a 75-cent increase in the seventh year. Lightford said the rate would be phased in by 2025.

Business interests also preferred a regional rollout of the tax increase. In Oregon and New York, high costs of living areas have a minimum wage that is higher than in more rural areas. Lightford said this would be discussed, but she was not sure it would be permissible per the Illinois constitution.

Senator Dave Koehler, a Peoria Democrat, raised the idea of regional tax breaks for employers in lower costof-living areas to counteract the \$15 minimum wage.

The committee also heard testimony from employers who said a \$15 minimum wage would be a "job killer," and a nursing home advocacy group proposed a measure to increase the state's reimbursement rate to Medicaid facilities as the wage increases.

The Illinois Association of Park Districts, small business lobbyists and the Illinois Restaurant Association all raised concerns that the hike could mean layoffs for minimum wage workers as

While the group agreed to several points of discussion, the clock was ticking for the interest groups to get their preferred language in the bill, as Gov. J.B. Pritzker wants the bill on his desk to sign prior to his budget address scheduled for Feb.



GOVERNMENT **EFFICIENCY COMMIS-SION:**

Woodstock Republican Rep. Steve Reick wants a private-sector commission to examine the spending habits and management practices of state agencies by minimizing redundancies in funds the state already

His legislation, House Joint Resolution 6 and House Bill 275, would create an 18-member commission to comb through reports from the auditor general's office and recommend ways to reduce spending, boost performance and adapt management strategies for state agencies. The group would be funded through private donations.

Commission members would be chosen by each of the four legislative leaders and Democratic Gov. J.B. Pritzker.

Among the proposal's detractors is the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability Executive Director Ralph Martire. The Center is a nonpartisan think tank that "promote[s] social and economic justice for everyone," according to its website.

Martire said the commission's organization as a 501(c)(4) could allow dark money to manipulate the

GOVERNMENT **REFORM BILLS**: A pair of Republican lawmakers filed government reform bills this week.

Rep. Margo McDermed of Mokena introduced a bill to ban any retired lawmaker

from registering as a lobbyist, or receiving or making payments as a lobbyist, for one year or the remainder of their term — whichever is longer.

Rep. David McSweeney of Barrington Hills put forth a bill to end to lawmaker pensions for new members after Nov. 3,

House committee assignments have not been handed out, SO McSweeney's McDermed's bills are stuck in the powerful, Democratcontrolled House Rules Committee. McDermed said it's possible her bill never makes it out of the commit-

REDISTRICTING **PROPOSAL:** For the second consecutive legislation, CHANGE Illinois is proposing a constitutional amendment that would change how the state's political boundaries are drawn.

The coalition of interest groups has been working since 2012 to change Illinois' redistricting process, which occurs every 10 years, after each U.S. Census. The next redistricting period will be in 2022.

CHANGE Illinois proposes no longer allowing the General Assembly and governor to decide the boundaries of districts. Instead, those decisions would be made by a commission that "demographically, politically and geographically" represents the prairie state.

The group's twin measures, sponsored by Sen. Julie Morrison (D-Deerfield) and Rep. Ryan Spain (R-Peoria), would place map-drawing under the purview of the state Supreme Court. The chief justice and most senior justice "who is not elected from the same political party" would together select 16 citizens to form a commission - seven Democrats, seven Republicans and two independents. It would require state Supreme Court justices to have political party affiliations.

redistricting revamp would require a constitutional amendment, which carries a high burden of approval to be successful. Both chambers of the General Assembly must give their support by a threefifths majority before it can go to voters. Then, 60 percent approval by voters is

COMPTROLLER'S WORDS OF CAUTION: Illinois Comptroller Susana Mendoza is imploring the General Assembly to be realistic with revenue projections this year to avoid adding to the state's backlog of unpaid bills.

A compromise budget passed last year was hailed as balanced by many lawmakers, but will actually add \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion to the state's backlog, which was estimated about \$7.3 billion as of Thursday, Jan.

One year ago, the General Assembly passed Mendoza's Debt Transparency Act, mandating state agencies to provide accurate monthly reports on liabilities, including the escalating cost of interest penalties. This allowed budgeteers to identify which agencies lacked adequate appropriations to process their bills and account for it in negoti-

Even with the adequate debt information, Mendoza said, a budget cannot be balanced without accurate revenue projections.

Shortfalls in last year's budget come from various

Last week I started to talk mid.

about awareness. You might

be asking yourself what

awareness has to do with

your health and ability to

change. The answer is

EVERYTHING! Here's what

what trans fat was. Today

every food sold in the U.S.

must list the amount of trans

fat it contains. Why? Because

we have become aware that

trans fats are very bad for you

and you should eliminate

these fats from your diet.

Another good example is the

FDA food pyramid. The old

food pyramid was designed

using the best knowledge

available at the time. Now

new knowledge has become

available and we have

become aware that we must

do things differently! So, it

was time to change the pyra-

• EP volleyball at Arcola–6 p.m.

• HS boys' basketball at Decatur vs St.

• HS girls' basketball Regional at Pana vs.

• EP Boys' Basketball Award Night–5:30

• HS boys' and girls' track at Uni High

• HS boys' basketball at Meridian-6 p.m.

Years ago, nobody knew

sources, including false revenues from the non-existent sale of the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago. It also included savings from proposals, such as a pension buyout plan, that will potentially fall short for the current fiscal year, the comptroller's news release said.

Other key findings Mendoza listed in her report

- The unpaid bill backlog continues to force the Of?ce of the Comptroller into crisis management, impede timely bill processing, cause instability for state programs, and creates unnecessary and costly late payment interest penalties.
- Given that the ?scal year 2019 budget also failed to address the current backlog of bills, taking signi?cant steps in fiscal year 2019 to pay down the backlog of unpaid bills – or even keep it static - is impossible.
- Temporary tools to manage the backlog granted under the current budget do not resolve systemic budgetary issues. Dedicated funding is needed to lower the bill backlog.

OPIOIDS ALTERNA-TIVE: Patients over the age of 21 who are prescribed opioids will have temporary access to medical marijuana as an alternative treatment after the state's Opioid Alternative Pilot Program began accepting patients Thursday, Jan. 31.

Under the program, patients must obtain a physician's certification of a condition which could require the prescription of an opioid. Such a prescription could be taken to a dispensary to receive medical marijuana for a fixed period of

The Illinois Department of Public Health's rules regulating the program can be found on their website at www.dph.illinois.gov.

The bill went live just a week after downstate Democratic Sen. Andy

REAL LIFE

WELLNESS

NOT THAT I'M AWARE OF...

The funny thing about

your awareness level is it

changes all the time. How

aware of your surroundings

are you when you are watch-

ing your favorite TV show?

Can a bomb go off and you

barely know what has hap-

pened? And then there are

other times when you can

hear a pin drop in the next

room. This is due to the dif-

ferent levels of awareness

to my original question. What

do awareness levels have to

do with your health and abil-

ity to change? The more

aware you are the more

power you can create and the

healthier you can become.

This means your job is to

become more aware of your-

self and create more personal

So, this brings me back

you have available to you.

By Dr. Bill Hemmer

Manar, of Bunker Hill, and Chicago Democrats Sen. Heather Steans and Rep. Kelly Cassidy hosted a Springfield town hall to discuss the legalization of cannabis recreationally. Gov. J.B. Pritzker has said he would embrace such a proposal.

TERM LIMITS FOR **LEADERS?** State Rep. Tom Demmer, a Dixon Republican, has filed a bill to limit terms for legislative leaders – such as powerful House Speaker Mike Madigan – in the General Assem-

Demmer filed an amendment to the Illinois Constitution on Thursday, Jan. 31, to limit the number of years any lawmaker could serve as speaker of the House of Representatives, president of the Senate, minority leader of the House or minority leader of the

Per the amendment, legislative leaders would be limited to serving for a total of eight years in any one position and 12 years combined in two or more posi-

Speaker Madigan is the longest-serving state house speaker in U.S. history and was first elected in 1983.

The powerful House Rules Committee headed by one of Madigan's main lieutenants - Rep. Greg Harris (D-Chicago) - controls the flow of any bill filed in the House and would have the power to prevent its committee hearing.

Capitol News Illinois is a nonprofit news service operated by the Illinois Press Foundation that provides coverage of state government to newspapers throughout Illinois. The mission of Capitol News Illinois is to provide credible and unbiased coverage of state government to the more than 400 daily and weekly newspapers that are members of the Illinois Press Association.

change in your awareness

level and you will become increasing healthy. Most

people don't even realize you have awareness levels and now you're telling me that I

can change them! Oh, yeah right! So how are you sup-

years, I have come across

awareness levels many times.

But to tell you the truth, I

didn't realize how important

awareness levels were until I

started to work on my own.

As my own awareness

increased, I then realized how

important they were to take

me to my own wellness

ing what awareness level

you're at, aren't you? Well,

that's a tough question to

answer in an article format.

But over the next couple of

weeks I'll describe the most

common awareness levels

and the steps you need to take

to go to the next level. But for

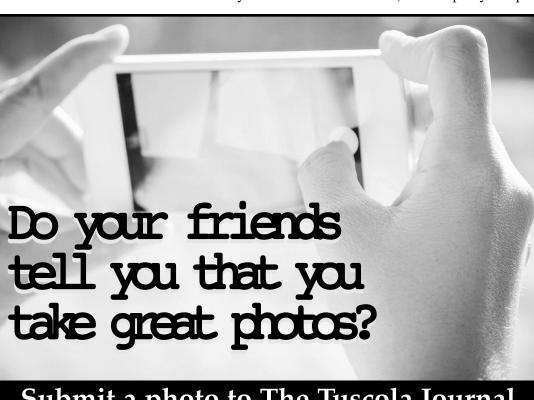
now, I'll give you a

hint...Knowledge is Power.

So, I bet you're wonder-

Throughout the research I have done over the last 30

posed to do that?



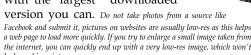
Submit a photo to The Tuscola Journal

The TUSCOLA

WE WELCOME COMMUNITY PHOTOS!

Tips for a more successfull photo submission:

- The quality or "resolution" of the picture is important - if it's too low, your picture may look blurry or pixelated in print.
- To get the best quality, start off with the 'largest' downloaded





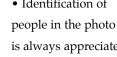


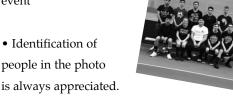
Required Information:

- Name of the person who took the photo
- Current phone number of photographer

• Identification of the photo i.e.

date, time, place, and





Email your photos to kayleigh@thetuscolajournal.com

Stop by 115 W. Sale St., Tuscola Call 253-5086 for more information

Thursday, Feb. 7

Indoor #1–7 p.m.

Tuesday, Feb. 5

Teresa–6 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 6

ALAH–7:30 p.m.

• EP volleyball at Okaw Valley–6 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 8

• Third Quarter Mid-Term

Tuscola student events this week

power. This will lead to a Talk to you next week!

- Saturday, Feb. 9 • Freshman boys' basketball at Unity
- Tourney • FFA Alumni Chili Supper/Pie Auction at Community Building–5 p.m.
- HS boys' basketball CIC vs NTC Shootout

Monday, Feb. 11

- FCCLA Week
- Freshman boys' basketball at Unity Tourney
- EP volleyball at JHOC tournament at home
 - Tuesday, Feb. 12
 - FCCLA Week
- EP volleyball at JHOC tournament at
 - HS boys' basketball vs Neoga–6 p.m.