



Illinois Legislative News

Chicago to host 2024 Democratic National Convention

City beat out Atlanta and New York after receiving support from Democratic Midwest governors

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The Democratic National Committee has announced that Chicago will host the party's 2024 presidential nominating convention.

The city beat out Atlanta and New York for the four-day convention next August after Democratic leaders in the Midwest pushed for it to be the site. It will be hosted at the city's United Center and McCormick Place.

A news release announcing the choice noted Chicago is "an ideal backdrop" to host the nominating convention for President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris. It will also highlight the importance of the Midwest as "a key voting bloc in the 2024 election," the release noted.

"Chicago is a great choice to host the 2024 Democratic National Convention," Biden said in the news release. "Democrats will gather to showcase our historic progress

including building an economy from the middle out and bottom up, not from the top down. From repairing our roads and bridges, to unleashing a manufacturing boom, and creating over 12.5 million new good-paying jobs, we've already delivered so much for hard working Americans – now it's time to finish the job."

Gov. JB Pritzker was a leading force behind the push to bring the convention to Chicago, as was outgoing Mayor Lori Lightfoot. Following a recent meeting with Mayor-elect Brandon Johnson, Pritzker said his administration has worked to relay to the DNC that "the best convention that anyone could have would be here in the city of Chicago."

He emphasized Chicago and Illinois' status as a pro-choice state that's "stood up for labor rights and workers" and taken action to ban assault weapons.

"And that's not true of some of the other competitors' states," he said.

He made similar points at an April news conference in Chicago.

"Now after all, Chicago and the entire Midwest looks like America, and is the capital at the heart of the nation," Pritzker said. "Illinois is home to a bustling metropolis, a strong rural tradition, thriving suburbs, not to mention a longstanding history rooted in civil rights, and workers rights, and reproductive rights."

The convention is scheduled for August 19-22 next year. It is expected to bring tens of thousands of visitors to Chicago. The city last held the convention in 1996.

"This region was critical to President Biden and vice-president Harris's 2020 victory," DNC Chair Jaime Harrison said at a news conference on April 12. "We won big here in 2020 and it will be a part of how we win big again in 2024. This region will also give us the opportunity to showcase the Biden-Harris economic agenda that is unleashing a manufacturing boom, strengthening U.S. supply chains, creating good paying union jobs and expanding economic opportunities."

The Republican Party will host their presidential nominating convention in July, roughly 90 miles north of Chicago in Milwaukee.

GOP Congressman Darin LaHood, of Dunlap, also announced that presumed presidential hopeful and Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis will be the keynote speaker at the 2023 Lincoln Day Dinner. The event hosted by the Peoria and Tazewell County Republican Central Committees will take place on Friday, May 12.

"Gov. Ron DeSantis is one of the preeminent conservative voices in our country, fighting back against the radical left," LaHood said in a statement. "As Governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis has enabled his state to thrive because he leads with fiscal responsibility, family values, and Constitutional principles. I am honored to welcome him to this year's Peoria-Tazewell Lincoln Day Dinner and look forward to hearing him share his Florida Blueprint with Central Illinois conservatives."

Secretary of state backs proposal allowing noncitizens to receive standard driver's licenses

For first time, those individuals would have a license that also functions as identification

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The Illinois House advanced a measure in late March that would allow noncitizen residents who are currently eligible for a "temporary visitor driver's license" to instead obtain a "standard" driver's license that can be used as identification.

Lawmakers created the temporary visitor driver's license, or TVDL, in 2013 to ensure all drivers on state roads have passed a road test regardless of legal residency. It is available to individuals who have lived in the state for over one year, do not have a social security number, and may or may not have government documentation authorizing their presence in the United States.

To receive one, the individual must provide their U.S. immigration documentation or, if they don't have that, a passport or consular card. They must also prove they have automobile insurance.

According to the secretary of state's office, more than 300,000 people currently have a TVDL. Under the bill, these would remain valid driver's licenses but the secretary of state would no longer issue new ones.

While the TVDL is valid as a driver's license, it was never valid as identification. The card contains a purple line with the letters "TVDL," and the phrase "Not Valid for Identification."

That's something immigrant rights activists said makes it difficult for the cardholder to do anything from pick up a prescription to buy alcohol. Rep. Angelica Guerrero-Cuellar (D-Chicago) said in floor debate that some businesses decline to accept the TVDL as identification even when paired with identification from the individual's native country.

Applicants for a standard driver's license would be required to follow the same process as applying for a TVDL, but the license they receive would be the same as one issued to any other Illinoisan whose ID does not comply with federal REAL ID guidelines.

REAL ID requirements are scheduled to go into effect in Illinois in May 2025, and they require stricter identification such

as a birth certificate and social security number to obtain one. The IDs are used for purposes such as air travel and visiting military bases and secure federal facilities.

Standard licenses contain the words "Federal Limits Apply," but they are otherwise valid as both a driver's license and ID card.

The measure, House Bill 3882, has support from Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias.

"This legislation will make our roads safer and protects immigrants who are legally able to drive," Giannoulias said in a statement. "As with all drivers, immigrants who drive in Illinois must prove they are safe, capable motorists in order to earn the standard driver's license."

The legislation's backers say it was motivated by the fact that those carrying a TVDL sometimes face discrimination because of the purple bar on the card. Rep. Barbara Hernandez (D-Aurora) is the lead sponsor of HB 3882.

"My parents were undocumented for 21 years," she said. "...My parents would have wished years ago that they could have a driver license. Today we're updating those driver licenses to turn them more standardized, to stop discrimination."

Rep. C.D. Davidsmeyer (R-Jacksonville) characterized the bill as an attempt to "hide" a person's status.

"I think the reality is we're trying to turn undocumented individuals into documented individuals," he said. "We have individuals who have come here outside of the legal process, and I know the legal process is broken. So why don't we work on encouraging the federal government to actually do something to fix a broken system, instead of hiding the fact that it's broken."

Rep. Elizabeth "Lisa" Hernandez (D-Cicero) noted that the TVDL is not only granted to individuals without legal residency status but also "those who are here legally from a foreign country temporarily."

"The premise behind the temporary driver's license was to allow individuals who are undocumented to be able to drive the road safely so that they can take their kids to

school, so they can go to the grocery store, so they can go to work," she said. "Unfortunately, over time, the purple ID has been viewed and recognized as a driver's license for the undocumented which is simply untrue."

Republican Rep. Dan Caulkins, of Decatur, questioned whether making TVDL holders eligible for a standard license would create a system that's ripe for voter fraud, since Illinoisans can register on the day of an election with a license and other identification.

Henry Haupt, a spokesperson for Giannoulias, said safeguards would remain in place to prevent ineligible individuals from being registered to vote. Under the current registration process, he said, a registrar "should never rely on a driver's license as proof of citizenship."

He noted anyone registering to vote must attest to their citizenship.

"While election officials ask to see identification when an applicant registers to vote, it is for the purpose of identifying the applicant, not proof of citizenship," he said in an email. "The voter application form

completed by the applicant requires the applicant to swear or affirm U.S. citizenship."

Haupt said the automatic voter registration process would not change under the bill.

"Applicants will still present the same documents as they did under the TVDL program, such as a foreign passport or consular identification card," he said. "Those documents will alert secretary of state facility employees that the applicant is not a U.S. citizen and therefore voter registration will not be offered."

Noncitizens will also be coded in the secretary of state's system differently than citizens, Haupt said, and the program won't allow for voter registration in that instance.

The bill also exempts a license application from entering the automatic voter registration process if there is no social security number associated with it.

The bill would also prohibit the use of driver's license data for immigration enforcement purposes unless immigration agents provide a court-issued warrant, order or subpoena for the information.

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