

# Illinois Millionaires Tax Doesn't Get Support

By Sean Reed | The Center Square

A proposed millionaires tax was shot down late Wednesday in the Illinois House of Representatives.

Democrat leadership said they weren't able to get enough votes together, but they aren't giving up.

Proposed House Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 21 would have raised the tax rate on income earned more than \$1 million from 4.95% to 7.95%.

Tax dollars brought in by the amendment would have been split equally between property tax relief and school funding.

Despite not being able to gather a large enough coalition to pass the tax in the single day between introduction and the deadline, House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch, D-Westchester, said his caucus won't be giving up.

"What we heard from listening to a lot of people over the last few days is that more work needs to be done. And we're committed to doing that work," Welch said. "We were very close. Very close. But close is not enough, and we're committed to getting it right."

In a committee hearing Tuesday, multiple organizations advocated against the tax, telling lawmakers it may be unconstitutional and harmful to small businesses.

Noah Finley, the state director for the National Federation of Independent Business, said his organization opposed the tax because it would unfairly impact many small business owners.

"Many of them file their business income under a personal tax return. So it would have put them at a disadvantage," Finley said. "This legislation would have detrimental impact to small businesses. Especially since there was no adjustment for CPI or inflation in it at that level. More and more businesses would have been caught up in it every single year."

He expressed relief that lawmakers heard the concerns of small business owners, but would not say if he thinks there is a future where a changed version of the bill has the NFIB's support.

House Republicans stood strong against the tax, questioning the feasibility of proposed tax relief in a committee hearing Tuesday.

In a statement Wednesday, Republicans said Democrats would take action to pass House Bill 9, an initiative from Rep. Dan Ugaste, R-St. Charles, which would fund property tax relief grants to school districts across the state.

Funding for such grants wasn't allocated to the Illinois Department of Education for 2026 or proposed in Gov. JB Pritzker's budget request for the coming year.

Darren Bailey, the Republican candidate for Illinois governor, told The Center Square he thought the proposal was deceiving.

"On paper, it looks and sounds awesome, but in reality everyone - absolutely everyone - is tired of being taxed," Bailey said.

# Transportation Providers, School & State Eases School Bus Driver Shortage

By Jenna Schweikert, Capital News Illinois

A nationwide school bus driver shortage, driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, persists in some parts of the country. But in Illinois, efforts to attract new demographics of bus drivers and make hiring easier have paid off.

Illinois school districts and transportation providers partnered with the secretary of state's office to increase hiring and retention in the school bus driver workforce.

First Student, the largest nationwide school transportation provider, initiated the connection with Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulias.

The shortage, the worst in decades, began in 2020 as a significant part of the bus driver workforce - elderly retirees - were among the most-affected by the virus, according to Leslie Norgren, vice president of consulting at First Student.

In a nationwide survey conducted in 2025 by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, a nonpartisan research organization, and HopSkipDrive, a school rideshare company, 80% of school administrators said school bus driver shortages were a problem in their district.

Eighty-three percent of respondents said staff in their districts had to take time away from their core duties to drive school buses or manage car lines at least a few times a year. Fifty-four percent did so weekly over the period.

And 90% said they faced a growing number of students who qualify for free school transportation amid a diminishing workforce and strict financial constraints.

According to its website, First-Student is hiring for about 40 part-time driver positions across

the state, from Chicago and its suburbs down to Carbondale.

But Norgren said that for now, the market has stabilized and there is no longer a shortage of bus drivers in Illinois.

"A lot of districts in Illinois outsource their transportation, and that's always been a model in Illinois, because that's what we do, right? That's our core business and our expertise," Norgren said. "We tend to be much stronger on the recruiting and retention side than at school districts whose core business is educating students."

In Chicago's public school district, only about 5.5% of 315,000 students are eligible for bus service under state law, according to a spokesperson for the district. To be eligible for bus service under Illinois law, kids must live more than 1.5 miles from their school or be in danger on their school route.

But that number is growing: An increase in the district's "most vulnerable" students, those with disabilities and those in temporary living situations, is contributing to an ongoing labor shortage in the district, according to the spokesperson.

But CPS has addressed the shortage by raising driver wages, coordinating with vendors including First Student, assisting with access to public transportation, adjusting school transportation schedules and advocating for adjustments to state tests and certifications, according to the district's spokesperson.

Spokespersons for the Decatur and Peoria public school districts declined to comment on their efforts to address the shortage. Springfield Public Schools did not respond to a request for comment.

## BRIDGETOWN EVENTS

102 North Ida St., Lacon, Illinois

- ◆ Weddings (Indoor/Outdoor)
- ◆ Funeral Dinners
- ◆ Meetings

- ◆ Reunions
- ◆ Showers
- ◆ Parties
- ◆ Banquets



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# THE CLASSIFIEDS

## FOR SALE

**FOR SALE:** 2016 Toro 50-inch Zero Turn riding mower with steering wheel. Bought new. Looks and runs great - \$1,600. 711 LaPrairie Rd., Sparland - (309) 361-0192. tfc-p

**FOR SALE:** 2008 Glendale Titanium 5th wheel, 30-ft. long - \$8,500. Also, 2008 Club Car, gas, yellow and street legal light kit. Custom rims - \$2,500. Phone (630) 433-0269. 1p

## MISC.

**WANTED TO BUY:** Antiques, collectibles, furniture, toys, post cards, hunting and fishing items, decoys, duck calls, fishing lures, coins, etc. Call Greg at 815-303-6173. 4-52c

## HELP WANTED

**PART-TIME** Office Assistant for Senior Citizen Housing Projects needed. Computer and people skills a must. Flexible hours to work with your schedule. 10-15 hours per week and located in Henry. For further details call 309-356-1112, or email resume to hha.itha.jenny@gmail.com 17-tfc

*St. Jude's Novena*

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved and preserved throughout the world, now and forever. Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us. St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us. St. Jude, help of the homeless, pray for us.

Say this prayer 9 times a day. By the 8th day your prayers will be answered.

Thank you St. Jude.  
M.C. 1p

*Thank You*

The family of Richard "Rick" Alden wishes to express our deep appreciation to friends and family for the many acts of kindness, messages of sympathy, and support received during this untimely death. A "Special" Thank you to the staff at the Illinois Cancer Care, OSF Medical and ICU for their care, and to Pastor Marty Hunt for his hospital visits, Pastor Alyssa Wier and Father Patrick Greenough for Beautiful Services.

**GO CHICAGO BEARS**

Judi Jesse  
Josh, Mollie & Laken Alden  
Zach Alden  
Brian, Christina, Bri, Callie, and Webb Hanson  
Jordan Jesse  
Siblings: Al Alden Family  
Ron Alden Family  
William Alden Family  
Jan Glogovsky Family 1p

## Fun Fact

Having an extreme, overwhelming fear of snakes is called **ophidiophobia**. It's more intense than the somewhat-scared feelings towards snakes most people have.

Ophidiophobia is an anxiety disorder that interferes with your daily life.

Source: my.clevelandclinic.org

## King Crossword

(ANSWERS ON PAGE 4)

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| <p><b>ACROSS</b></p> <p>1 Lopsided win</p> <p>5 Have bills</p> <p>8 Wan</p> <p>12 Golden Fleece ship</p> <p>13 Fix illegally</p> <p>14 Final Four gp.</p> <p>15 Speed</p> <p>17 Teri of "Tootsie"</p> <p>18 Actor Estevez</p> <p>19 Looked closely (at)</p> <p>21 Pitcher Maglie</p> <p>22 Bath powder</p> <p>23 Speed (up)</p> <p>26 Poetic contraction</p> <p>28 Period of rule</p> <p>31 El-Masry of "Star Wars"</p> <p>33 Bro, maybe</p> <p>35 Stair part</p> <p>36 Deeply touched</p> <p>38 Its cap. is Brussels</p> <p>40 "— outta here!"</p> <p>41 "Dream on!"</p> <p>43 Actor Holbrook</p> <p>45 Locust</p> <p>47 Talisman</p> <p>51 Seethe</p> <p>52 Maximum contents</p> <p>54 Diminutive suffix</p> | <p>55 Hirohito's title (Abbr.)</p> <p>56 One-named supermodel</p> <p>57 Sun beams</p> <p>58 Verbalize</p> <p>59 Church section</p> <p><b>DOWN</b></p> <p>1 Gushing review</p> <p>2 Utah city</p> <p>3 Wrinkled fruit</p> <p>4 Workshop array</p> <p>5 Baltimore baseballers</p> <p>6 Humorist</p> | <p>7 Pharaoh's land</p> <p>8 The "A" of UCLA</p> <p>9 Shortage</p> <p>10 Fast runner</p> <p>11 Lawn party site</p> <p>16 Pisa farewell</p> <p>20 Jug handle</p> <p>23 Zodiac animal</p> <p>24 Comic Phillips</p> <p>25 Liveliness</p> <p>27 Tease</p> <p>29 "My word!"</p> <p>30 "Science Friday" network</p> <p>32 Secondhand deals</p> <p>34 "Cheer up!"</p> <p>37 Carried out</p> <p>39 Tibetan monk</p> <p>42 Confronts</p> <p>44 "— di Lammermoor"</p> <p>45 Driver with a handle</p> <p>46 Tiny bit</p> <p>48 Walk unevenly</p> <p>49 LAX guesses</p> <p>50 Broadway actress Daly</p> <p>53 Docs' org.</p> |
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**Police Officer Applications Accepted for Lateral Transfer and Non-Certified New Entry Level**

The city of Pana will be accepting applications for employment to update both new and lateral eligibility lists for open full-time police positions.

**Minimum requirements:** U.S. Citizen; High School Diploma or equivalent; age 21 or older, valid driver's license, not have been convicted of felony or certain misdemeanor offenses defined by statute, and must successfully complete all requested stages of testing.

**Starting Salary \$5,519.36 - \$5,729.62/month** with additional 8.91% pension contribution made above base salary by the City for downstate police pension plan.

**Applications can be obtained in person at Pana PD, on the webpage: [cityofpana.org/careers](http://cityofpana.org/careers), or contacting Pana PD at 217-562-2141.**

Applications must be returned via email at [cityclerk@cityofpana.org](mailto:cityclerk@cityofpana.org), or received at Pana PD or via U.S. Mail on or before **May 8, 2026**.

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