

The LABOR Paper

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Illinois AFL-CIO primary endorsements: many qualified candidates

COUNTRYSIDE, Ill. (PAI)—With the 2026 Illinois statewide primary election fast approaching, on St. Patrick's Day, the state AFL-CIO issued its political endorsements for federal and state races in the Land of Lincoln—and what's most notable are both the number of candidates who are union members, 20, and the "holes": Key races, including for the U.S. Senate, with no endorsement.

The reason for the "holes" in the federation's endorsement list is "There were a lot of really good candidates out there in the field," Illinois AFL-CIO Communications Director Alyssa Goodstein said in a telephone interview. And various unions had split among them, she added. As might be expected, the federation endorsed incumbent Gov. J.B. Pritzker (D), a strong supporter of workers, for re-election to a third term. Pritzker is on the short list of serious possibilities for the 2028 Democratic presidential nomination.

Current Lieut. Gov. Juliana Stratton is one of three main Democratic hopefuls, along with Reps. Robin Kelly and Raja Krishnamoorthi, seeking to succeed retiring Sen. Dick Durbin (D). The senatorial seat is considered safely Democratic.

Another "no endorsement" is in the state Comptroller's race. Voters will also select party nominees for 17 U.S. House seats.

All federal-level endorsements were of Democrats, including two union members, notably Rep. Nikki Budzinski. On the state level, State Sen. John Curran and six state House Republican hopefuls gained the federation's backing, while the other 150-plus were Democrats. "Candidates must demonstrate a strong commitment to working families through their voting record and/

or a completed candidate questionnaire," the state federation explained.

One of the six GOPers, State Rep. Brad Stephens of the Chicago suburb of Rosemont, is also listed as a unionist by the state federation, though his campaign bio does not mention that. The federation issued no endorsements in U.S. House open seats in the Chicago area's 2nd, 7th and 8th congressional districts. It endorsed Evanston Mayor Dan Biss for the open 9th District seat, which covers Chicago's northern lakefront and nearby northern and northwestern suburbs. It also endorsed Patty Garcia, top aide to retiring Rep. Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, in the Southwest Side 4th District.

Endorsements required a 2/3rds vote among the 120 delegates of its Committee on Political Education, who met in the Chicago suburb of Countryside on December 9. Endorsements open the doors for state federation aid in door-knocking, campaign organizing and logistics, said Goodstein.

The state fed's endorsements are of particular help to smaller unions and locals who do not have extensive political operations or the resources to establish them, Goodstein explained. "We can offer support and help them establish a field program," she added. It has \$2 million available for that.

That can be significant. In the last off-year election in 2022, when the federation and member unions went all out to enact an amendment enshrining the right to organize in the state Constitution—and banning local right to work (for less) laws, AFL-CIO members knocked on more than a million doors.

The amendment passed overwhelmingly, ratifying Illinois'

pro-worker status. It's surrounded by deep-red Kentucky, Missouri and Indiana and swing states Iowa (pink) and Wisconsin (purple).

"Illinois needs to remain a pro-labor bastion in the Midwest and ensure we are electing pro-labor candidates to protect middle-class wages, affordable health care, secure retirement and safety on the job," state fed President Tim Drea said.

That's especially true now as Illinois, like other states, faces massive federal aid cutbacks. And Republican President Donald Trump has even said he intends to single out "blue" states, such as Illinois, for deeper slashes. He did that, too, during his first term, eliminating the itemized deduction for state and local tax payments—as well as the deduction for union dues.

Now, Trump wants to withhold federal food stamp aid to blue states unless they turn over personal information—names, addresses, Social Security numbers and the like—to his regime so Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, who have become infamous for violence and viciousness in the Chicago area, can use them to target and kidnap people of color, documented or not.

"Gains are fragile and can disappear with the stroke of a pen, and our members are ready to do whatever it takes to protect their hard-earned union rights," state federation Secretary-Treasurer Pat Devaney warned. "We're looking forward to working with the candidates who understand the real difference unions make in our members' lives and who are committed to building on

our victories from Washington to Springfield."

The state COPE meeting followed the final wrap-up "veto session," of the heavily Democratic and heavily pro-worker state legislature. That session, combined with the regular session earlier this year, produced a raft of pro-worker legislation, according to both Goodstein and The Labor Paper of Peoria.

Topping the list was a restructuring—and a dedicated revenue source—for the Chicago area's sprawling mass transit systems, which include city and suburban buses, commuter railroads stretching from Lake Geneva and Kenosha, Wis., into the western and southwestern Chicago suburbs and all the way into northern Indiana as far as South Bend.

The one issue left unresolved, said Goodstein, was public worker pension funding. Prior governors from both major parties left some years unfunded and as a result, the pension plans are short of the money they would need for full benefits for all future retirees.

The transit bill rolled several Chicago-area mass transit agencies into one overriding Northern Illinois Transit Authority. A coalition of 31 unions and locals, the Labor Alliance for Public Transportation, lobbied all year long for it.

Union members, especially from Amalgamated Transit Union locals which represent Chicago-area bus, subway, El and Metra workers, were ubiquitous at mass transit stations, discussing issues and funding with riders all year long.

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NOTICE

The Labor Paper office will be closed from
December 22, 2025 - January 12, 2026.
Happy Holidays!

House votes to restore workers' union rights: now on to the Senate

from AFGE

All eyes are on the U.S. Senate after a bipartisan majority of lawmakers in the U.S. House approved legislation to restore collective bargaining rights for more than a million federal employees.

The House voted 231-195 on Dec. 11 to approve the Protect America's Workforce Act (HR 2550), which would rescind the executive orders President Trump issued in March and August that banned collective bargaining for most of the federal workforce.

"By voting to approve the Protect America's Workforce Act, 231 members of Con-

gress have demonstrated their support for the nonpartisan civil service, for the dedicated employees who serve our country with honor and distinction, and for the critical role that collective bargaining has in fostering a safe, protective, and collaborative workplace," AFGE National President Everett Kelley said.

"We need to build on this seismic victory in the House and get immediate action in the Senate – and also ensure that any future budget bills similarly protect collective bargaining rights for the largely unseen civil servants who keep our government running," Kelley said.

AFGE extends its deep appreciation to every member of Congress who voted for the bill – standing up for the rights of federal workers to protect our nation, care for veterans, process Social Security benefits, secure our borders, respond to disasters, and keep the government running for the American people.

President Kelley specifically thanked Reps. Jared Golden of Maine and Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania for their efforts to build a bipartisan coalition of pro-labor lawmakers in support of restoring federal workers' union rights.

Take Action Now: Help AFGE get this bill over the finish line by urging your U.S. senators to support S. 2837, the Senate version of the House-passed bill that would restore federal workers' collective bargaining rights. Every member of the Democratic caucus has cosponsored this bill, as well as Republican Sens. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Susan Collins of Maine. We need additional bipartisan support to ensure its passage.

Peoria Labor Temple bricks still available

Would you like a piece of Illinois Labor History? Peoria Labor Temple bricks are still available.

Bricks are available for a \$25 donation to the the Illinois Labor History Society.

Bricks are available at the Peoria Labor Paper office, 621 Commercial #1B, Peoria, Illinois 61602.

For more information reach out to Sharon Williams at 309-264-1119.

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*sharon@westcentralbtc.org and sent to
local unions for distribution*

BRADLEY

Discounted tickets for union contractors & employees!

Bradley Athletics is pleased to support local union workers for their work in the community and wishes to invite workers, friends, and families, to a night of basketball as the Bradley Braves host the Northern Iowa Panthers at the Carver Arena.

UPPER BOWL: \$6 + (taxes and fees)

LOWER BOWL: \$10 + (taxes and fees)

LOWER BOWL CORNERS: \$25 + (taxes and fees)

UNION NIGHT

WITH THE BRADLEY BRAVES

JANUARY 10TH, 2026

To buy tickets,
visit: <https://www.gofevo.com/event/2026bradleyMBBUnions>

Illinois AFL-CIO makes endorsements for March 2026 primary



The Illinois AFL-CIO makes endorsements for state and federal candidates and ballot initiatives including U.S. Senate, Governor, Attorney General, Secretary of State, Comptroller, Treasurer, U.S. Congress, State Legislature, Supreme and Appellate courts. These endorsement recommendations are voted on by the statewide Committee on Political Education (COPE), made up of representatives from all affiliated unions, statewide councils and regional AFL-CIO organizations. This process ensures the full diversity of the labor movement and regional diversity of Illinois is reflected in our endorsements. The Illinois AFL-CIO Executive Board reviews and votes on final endorsements.

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State lawmakers balked without provisions to rid the agencies of top-heavy management and to harmonize fare systems to make riding transit easier. Once that agreement was reached, the measure moved \$860 million in highway funding money to mass transit the **Labor Paper** reported, with 85% to the Chicago area—Illinois’s economic engine—and the rest downstate. Another \$200 million in road fund interest, with 90% to the Chicago area, will be dedicated to transit improvements. There will also be a small sales tax in the Chicago-Northeastern Illinois area alone, to raise \$480 million for mass transit.

The labor alliance hailed the law as “a hard-won victory for everyone who wants safer, more-reliable and more efficient public transportation.” The Teamsters, who represent some Metra commuter rail workers, called it “a colossal victory... that averts service cuts and layoffs.”



Italics – incumbent
* - union member

Governor

JB Pritzker (D)

U.S. Senate

No endorsement

Attorney General

Kwame Raoul (D)

Secretary of State

Alexi Giannoulias (D)

Treasurer

Michael Frerichs (D)

Comptroller

No endorsement

U.S. House

- 1st – *Jonathan Jackson (D)*
- 2nd – No endorsement
- 3rd – *Delia Ramirez (D)*
- 4th – *Patty Garcia (D)*
- 5th – *Mike Quigley (D)*
- 6th – *Sean Casten (D)*
- 7th – No endorsement
- 8th – No endorsement
- 9th – *Dan Biss (D)*
- 10th – *Brad Schneider (D)*
- 11th – *Bill Foster (D)*
- 12th – *Julie Fortier (D)*
- 13th – *Nikki Budzinski (D)**
- 14th – *Lauren Underwood (D)*
- 15th – *Kyle Nudo (D)**
- 16th – *Paul Nolley (D)*
- 17th – *Eric Sorensen (D)*

State Senate

- 2nd – *Omar Aquino (D)*
- 3rd – *Mattie Hunter (D)*
- 5th – *Lakesia Collins (D)**
- 6th – *Sara Feigenholtz (D)*
- 8th – *Ram Villivalam (D)*
- 9th – *Patrick Hanley (D)*
- 11th – *Mike Porfirio (D)*
- 12th – *Celina Villanueva (D)*
- 14th – *Emil Jones Jr (D)*
- 15th – *Napoleon Harris III (D)*
- 17th – *Elgie Sims (D)*
- 18th – *Fran Hurley (D)*
- 20th – *Graciela Guzman (D)**
- 21st – *Laura Ellman (D)*

- 23rd – *Suzu Glowiak Hilton (D)*
- 24th – *Seth Lewis (R)*
- 26th – *Nabeela Syed (D)*
- 27th – *Carina Santa Maria (D)*
- 29th – *Julie Morrison (D)*
- 30th – *Adriane Johnson (D)*
- 32nd – *Karen Battaglia (D)**
- 33rd – *Michelle Clark (D)*
- 36th – *Mike Halpin (D)*
- 39th – *Don Harmon (D)*
- 41st – *John Curran (R)*
- 42nd – *Linda Holmes (D)*
- 48th – *Doris Turner (D)**
- 57th – *Chris Belt (D)*
- 59th – *Tamiko “TC” Mueller (D)*

State House

- 1st – *Aaron Ortiz (D)**
- 2nd – *Lisa Hernandez (D)*
- 3rd – *Eva Dina Delgado (D)*
- 4th – *Lilian Jimenez (D)*
- 5th – *Kimberly DuBuclet (D)*
- 6th – *Sonya Harper (D)*
- 7th – *Emanuel Chris Welch (D)*
- 8th – *LaTonya Mitts (D)*
- 9th – *Yolonda Morris (D)**
- 10th – *Omar Williams (D)**
- 11th – *Ann Williams (D)*
- 14th – *Kelly Cassidy (D)*
- 15th – *Mike Kelly (D)**
- 16th – *Kevin Olickal (D)*
- 17th – *Jennifer Gong-Gershowitz (D)*
- 18th – *Robyn Gabel (D)*
- 19th – *Lindsey LaPointe (D)*
- 20th – *Brad Stephens (R)**
- 21st – *Abdelnasser Rashid (D)*
- 22nd – *Angie Guerrero-Cuellar (D)*
- 23rd – *Edgar Gonzalez (D)*
- 24th – *Theresa Mah (D)*
- 25th – *Curtis Tarver II (D)*
- 26th – *Kam Buckner (D)*
- 27th – *Justin Slaughter (D)*
- 28th – *Bob Rita (D)**
- 29th – *Thaddeus Jones (D)*
- 30th – *Will Davis (D)*
- 31st – *Michael Crawford (D)*
- 32nd – *Lisa Davis (D)**
- 33rd – *Marcus Evans (D)*
- 35th – *Mary Gill (D)*
- 36th – *Rick Ryan (D)*
- 37th – *Pat Sheehan (R)*
- 38th – *Debbie Meyers-Martin (D)*
- 39th – *Will Guzzardi (D)*
- 40th – *Jaime Andrade (D)*
- 41st – *Janet Yang Rohr (D)*
- 42nd – *Lynn LaPlante (D)**

- 43rd – *Anna Moeller (D)*
- 44th – *Fred Crespo (D)*
- 45th – *Martha Deuter (D)*
- 46th – *Diane Blair-Sherlock (D)**
- 47th – *Erica Bray-Parker (D)*
- 48th – *Jennifer Sanalidro (R)*
- 48th – *Amanda Zahorak (D)*
- 49th – *Maura Hirschauer (D)*
- 50th – *Barbara Hernandez (D)*
- 51st – *Jenny Levin (D)*
- 52nd – *Erin Chan Ding (D)*
- 53rd – *Nicole Grasse (D)*
- 54th – *Mary Beth Canty (D)*
- 55th – *Justin Cochran (D)*
- 56th – *Michelle Mussman (D)*
- 57th – *Tracy Katz Muhl (D)*
- 58th – *Bob Morgan (D)*
- 59th – *Daniel Didech (D)*
- 60th – *Rita Mayfield (D)*
- 61st – *Joyce Mason (D)*
- 62nd – *Laura Faver Dias (D)*
- 65th – *Ricky Rivard (D)*
- 66th – *Suzanne Ness (D)*
- 67th – *Maurice West II (D)*
- 68th – *Dave Vella (D)*
- 72nd – *Gregg Johnson (D)**
- 73rd – *Nicole Dopler (D)*
- 76th – *Amy “Murri” Briel (D)*
- 77th – *Norma Hernandez (D)*
- 78th – *Camille Lilly (D)*
- 79th – *Robert Ellington-Snipes (D)**
- 80th – *Anthony DeLuca (D)*
- 81st – *Anne Stava (D)*
- 82nd – *Nicole La Ha (R)*
- 83rd – *Matt Hanson (D)**
- 84th – *Jared Ploger (D)**
- 85th – *Dagmara “Dee” Avelar (D)**
- 86th – *Larry Walsh Jr (D)**
- 91st – *Sharon Chung (D)**
- 92nd – *Jehan Gordon-Booth (D)*
- 95th – *Mike Coffey (R)*
- 96th – *Sue Scherer (D)*
- 97th – *Harry Benton (D)**
- 98th – *Natalie Manley (D)*
- 103rd – *Carol Ammons (D)*
- 104th – *Brandun Schweizer (R)*
- 111th – *Rosetta Brown (D)*
- 112th – *Katie Stuart (D)*
- 113th – *Jay Hoffman (D)**
- 114th – *Kevin Schmidt (R)*
- 118th – *Chip Markel (D)**

Judicial

- 1st App – *Judith Rice (D)*
- 3rd App – *Margaret “Peggy” O’Connell (D)*