



Nicole Blodgett <nblodgett@panaschools.com>

Fwd: The ultimate incentive for youths to vote

1 message

Jason Bauer <jbauer@panaschools.com>
To: Nicole Blodgett <nblodgett@panaschools.com>

Mon, Nov 25, 2019 at 7:52 AM

FYI

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **State School News Service** <j.m.broadway74@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Nov 25, 2019 at 6:19 AM

Subject: The ultimate incentive for youths to vote

To: <jbauer@panaschools.com>

Subscribe to ISNS



Volume 25, Number 64, November 25, 2019 --- [Education bills signed into law - or vetoed - [at this link.](#)]

To view the web version, [click here.](#)

The ultimate incentive for youths to vote

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

Three School Code bills [passed in the recent "veto session"](#) of the General Assembly. All originated in the Senate, where they currently reside, and they must soon be delivered to Gov. JB Pritzker for his consideration. They passed with pretty comfortable vote margins, so he's likely to sign them all into law. The bills are:

- **SB0010**: Allows paraprofessionals to test out of certain requirements for licensure.
- **SB0460**: Delays until July 1, 2020, the effective date of previously enacted requirements for advance parental notification, with documents, of special education students' IEP team meetings.
- **SB1970**: Gives students who are eligible to vote two hours off school for that purpose.

That last bill, the one about voting-eligible students getting time off school for two hours so they can vote, was the subject of a recent email message from an ISNS subscriber. The polls open before school starts, and don't close until long after the schools are out. So why do those students need a two-hour break to vote?

Now, this is what might be called "hearsay." I didn't monitor the committee hearings for SB 1970, and I missed the floor debates as well. So I'm basing my response just on surmises. I do know that election [turn-outs are considered important](#), especially in Illinois. I think the issue is more about *motivation* than opportunity.

Just thinking, would an 18-year-old spend two hours of his "own time" to go to a polling place and stand in line with a clutter of adults - most of them quite elderly - to do a civic duty that he's never done before? I'm guessing, probably not. But for the conspicuous prestige of getting out of school? Absolutely!

Although all legislators talk about their desire to get young people interested in democratic processes, the bill to get them out to vote was controversial - along political party lines - as committee and floor votes show. A question lingers in the air: [Why didn't Republicans want to](#) motivate youths to get out and vote?

A related bill, [HB 2265](#), requiring "at least one semester of civics education" in any (not all) of grades 6, 7 or 8, passed in the spring. It had [895 proponents](#) - the League of Women Voters, public school and university folks and others - and it had [61 opponents listed](#) - some schools and school management associations, mainly.

Why the opposition? It's a *mandate* - and don't we already have plenty of them? Also, as *filed*, it would have had to take effect almost immediately, this school year. But a House amendment gave the schools until the 2020-2021 school year to implement this one. So it passed by large vote margins and was signed into law.

But with this bill, too, there was a sharp partisan divide when the roll was called on the floor of the [House](#) and then in the [Senate](#). Members of the Republican caucuses generally withheld support, by either voting against HB 2265 or not voting at all. Was that just because the bill's a mandate? I don't think so.

Now that the "veto session" has concluded, it will be almost February before Illinois legislators return to the Capitol to begin committee and floor debates of bills in the 2020 Spring Session of the General Assembly. Here' the [House calendar](#); it is very much like the [Senate's](#). No legislators are present for "perfunctory" session days, but actions (such as the filing of bills) can be read into the record on those occasions. The first regular session day is January 28.

As you see, Gov. JB Pritzker is scheduled to deliver his "State of the State" message on January 29. Typically, that is a time when a governor will briefly describe past achievements, characterize the state's current status (making progress but still in dire fiscal stress) and then identify policy goals for the year.

Civics lesson coming: Between now and the middle of December, I will give you all a look over the horizon at the major events, deadlines and issues likely to be addressed by the policymakers from January until the session's adjournment on May 31. This year's achievements were significant, but there's much to be done in 2020.

Meanwhile, here's your assignment: Using the "[contact](#)" link, give me *your thoughts* on the cause of our country's severe political polarization. Just a *sentence or two*, maybe a paragraph. No ponderous essays. I'm interested in knowing how you view this issue and, as you may suspect, I'll share my perceptions about it with you.

Now let's turn our attention to a few government figures - state and federal - to folks who make governance happen and to the ways they affect public education in Illinois. We'll begin with the recent announcement that one of the most effective state legislators of the last four decades will retire in January.

You might think [Sen. John Cullerton](#) (D-Chicago) would be hard to replace as President of the Illinois Senate. He's retiring a full year before the end of his current term after 41 years in the Illinois General Assembly - 13 in the House and 28 in the Senate. WTTW's [Amanda Vinicky reported](#) Cullerton's announcement.

John just turned 71 last month. I've known him since 1981, when he was just 33 and I was 38. He had just begun a second term in the House, but it was clear to me that he was a rising star. Speaker Michael Madigan guided the House for most of John's time in that chamber. He and Madigan seemed to be good friends.

But they had differing agendas. [Capitol Fax owner Rich Miller](#) pointed out that, unlike Madigan, Cullerton "always wanted to find ways to get things done - and he got a lot done." (Miller started Capitol Fax in 1993, two years before ISNS. He is easily the most prolific and respected journalist reporting on Illinois government.)

Cullerton and Madigan have shared one important trait. Both of them have recruited, and helped to elect, and then groomed for leadership, some of the most dedicated and talented legislators, probably in the country. Rich Miller's column in the *Illinois Times* (linked above) lists a few who might take Cullerton's job.

I agree with Rich that [Sen. Kimberly Lightford](#) (D-Hillside) is a strong possibility. She's announced her candidacy and she already holds the second most powerful Senate position, that of Majority Leader. You know Lightford as a major force in school policy, a leader who can wrestle the most difficult issues through.

[Sen. Heather Steans](#) (D-Chicago) would be another strong candidate. She also has been effective as a sponsor of complex and difficult policy initiatives, especially state budget appropriations. Significantly, her sister, Robin Steans, is the talented president of [Advance Illinois](#), the education advocacy coalition.

[Sen. Andy Manar](#) (D-Bunker Hill), the legislator most responsible for enactment of the historic "evidence-based" school funding legislation in 2017, would also have a shot. Prior to being elected to the Senate, he was Cullerton's Chief of Staff. No one knows the process better or communicates more effectively than Manar.

There are others. [Sen. Don Harmon](#) (D-Oak Park) and [Sen. Melinda Bush](#) (D-Grayslake) are legislators of rare ability. So is [Sen. Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant](#) (D-Plainfield), who currently chairs the Senate Education Committee. Any of these folks could hit the ground running and continue Cullerton's model of leadership.

To those who worry - or are hopeful - that President Donald Trump will be impeached by the U.S. House and removed from office by the Senate, be assured that *it will not happen*. The authors of the U.S. Constitution properly made it difficult, almost impossible, for a president's term to be curtailed in that way.

The House may approve articles of impeachment. That's happened only twice, most recently to President William Clinton. But impeachment takes just a simple majority vote. For the Senate to "convict" would take 67 votes, a two-thirds majority. It would require the votes of at least 20 Republican senators. Impossible.

Still, the *current moment is historic*. It compares with the 1973-74 "Watergate" investigations that led President Richard Nixon to resign. (He had been told by Senate Republican leaders that he otherwise would surely be removed from office for his role in the cover-up of crimes related to his 1972 reelection.)

[This 2-minute video clip archived by C-Span](#) airs the *beginning of the end of the Nixon presidency*. The Senate had created a "Watergate Committee" to investigate a foiled break-in of Democrat Party offices at a Washington hotel. The crime had been perpetrated by "burglars" who carelessly failed to conceal their connection to Nixon.

White House employee Alexander Butterfield is seen in the clip revealing that a *secret audio recording system* taped all conversations that took place in Nixon's offices starting about 1970. I knew when I heard [Butterfield's testimony](#) broadcast live that he had provided the "smoking gun" that would doom the president.

C-Span labeled the clip July 16, 1973, but that is not correct. It was July 13, one week after my 30th birthday. I was off from my job as a reporter that Friday, working on a project in my back yard and listening to testimony. (When Butterfield told of Nixon's audio taping system, I sawed into a finger. The scar lasted for decades.)

You don't forget where you were at historic moments like that.

Insecurity led to Nixon's downfall. He seemed paranoid, fearful of political "enemies." He should not have been. He had been reelected in 1972 by a huge landslide. Even I had voted for him. (Few of us Democrats liked George McGovern, his opponent.) His job performance *as president*, I thought, often had been exceptional.

The C-Span clip shows [Sen. Fred Thompson \(R-Tennessee\)](#) eliciting the damning testimony from Butterfield. (Thompson had been a TV star of the long-running crime series "Law and Order.") GOP senators would have cast the votes to convict Nixon in 1974; loyalty to one's political party was not as iron-clad then as it is now.

Another Alexander - last name Vindman - was a key witness in the current U.S. House inquiry into allegations that President Donald Trump dangled nearly \$400 million in military defense assistance to Ukrain in efforts to get that country to take actions that would benefit Trump's 2020 reelection campaign.

Vindman, a decorated Army lieutenant colonel with the National Security Council and assigned to the White House, heard the July 25 phone call between Trump and Ukrain's new president Volodymyr Zelensky in which the Ukrainian spoke of the need for the assistance and Trump countered that he needed "a favor, though."

Vindman [testified last week that he](#) "couldn't believe what I was hearing." He said he reported the departure from policy toward Ukrain through his chain of command, "because that was my duty." Interestingly, in his testimony Vindman often referred to his "duty." Indeed, he seemed to have a strongly [Kantian devotion to duty](#).

My sense of Vindman was not just that he seems unrelentingly *driven by principle*. That may have been a reason why the efforts of Republicans on the hearing committee to besmirch his character and undermine his credibility were described in the media as having [backfired in a memorable fashion](#).

The constitutional strife of 1973-74 was no more intense than the current crisis. The 2020 election stakes are high for the human services, and especially for public education in all 50 states. Trump seems personally uninterested in federal education policy, but Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos is an unapologetic privatizer.

While DeVos seems to have earned the scorn of all education constituencies, no one can accuse her of laziness. She's traveled the country [denigrating public education](#) as "dead end" for children and spreading the gospel of vouchers and charter schools and tax credits for the rich to fund private school tuition.

While the war on public schools that began in 1983 with the publication of *A Nation At Risk* seems to be winding down, Betsy DeVos still plows ahead, never acknowledging the contributions public education has made to build an economy in which she and her husband have pyramid-schemed their way to untold riches.

She's diverted tens of millions of federal dollars from programs supporting public schools. Few, if any, advocates for public schools would seem likely to welcome four more [years of Betsy DeVos](#) education policy.

To contact me: Use the link below. As you "submit" your message, it comes to me by email; my "reply" will arrive as email to you. Your message may be complex and "attached" to a document, or it may be as simple as "call me."

IF YOU NEED TO SPEAK WITH ME directly, leave a phone number for me to call and tell me what would be a good time to converse. I am always connected to my email, and I promise to respond to you as soon as possible.

Invoice Reminder: All invoices are *emailed* via the PNC Bank. ISNS is *now paperless*. If you need me to resend an invoice, use the contact link to tell me. I deeply appreciate your support of ISNS. This service cannot exist without you.

Your input - questions, comments, suggestions - are valued. For twenty-four years ISNS has been guided by wisdom "from the field." To contribute in this way, just [click this link to my contact form](#).

State School News Service (C) 2019

Subscribe to ISNS

DO NOT CLICK THE 'UNSUBSCRIBE' LINK! That would automatically drop you from the ISNS subscriber list. The "unsubscribe" link is required so we cannot remove it. But to continue receiving the ISNS newsletter, DO NOT CLICK IT. If you wish to update your account, including choosing your email preference (HTML or text-only) please [submit this form](#). Otherwise, use the "contact form" link in the last paragraph of today's newsletter to contact Jim Broadway for any reason. Thank you.

State School News Service, [347 S Durkin Dr, Springfield, IL 62704](#)

SafeUnsubscribe™ jbauer@panaschools.com

Forward this email | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by j.m.broadway74@gmail.com in collaboration with



Try email marketing for free today!

--

Mr. Jason Bauer
Superintendent - Pana CUSD #8
14 E. Main Street
Pana, IL 62557
Phone: (217) 562-1500
Fax: (217) 562-1501