



Jim Broadway

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Illinois School News Service

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All bills now delivered to Rauner

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

The last bills to be delivered by the legislature to Gov. Bruce Rauner for his consideration reached his custody last Friday. Time's up now. Per the Constitution, the House and Senate have just 30 days to certify the passage of legislation and send it to the governor. This year [he received 613](#) (way too many) bills.

They didn't arrive all at once, of course. A few even passed and got delivered before the spring session adjourned May 31. A dozen or so have already been signed into law. Four bills were fatally vetoed. But the rest of the legislators' products are in a pile on Rauner's desk, waiting for him to pick the winners and losers.

At this time, Rauner has taken no action on the 33 School Code-amending bills that passed both chambers of the General Assembly and have been delivered to him. You can [see them at this link](#). The governor has 60 calendar days to decide on his action. If he has not acted by then, a bill simply would become law.

In my experience (since 1981) I don't recall any Illinois governor allowing a bill to become law without any action at all on his part. Governors have either signed bills into law or vetoed them in some fashion, putting the ball back in the court of the legislature, which can "override" a veto by extraordinary majority votes.

Is Illinois school policy similar to that enacted in other states? You can use the searchable databases maintained by the National Conference of State Legislatures to find out. For example, the NCSL database on "Educational Bill Tracking" can be seen [at this link](#). Let's see what's being enacted in relation to teachers.

In the "Topics" column, scroll down and check the box for "Teacher Issues"; then in the column at the right click the box for "All States"; then click "Search." The NCSL database quickly delivers a long list of bills from many states, including nine that were filed in Illinois. All were "enacted" and none were vetoed.

A review of this long list of bills on teacher issues - organized by states in alphabetical order - will show you that states are working hard to address shortages of teachers, especially in certain subject areas, while they continue to revise statutory requirements of obtaining and renewing teacher credentials.

Illinois is thought to have politically polarized legislative bodies. It's an exaggeration, you should know. And as it relates to education policy, it is not even very true. Most substantive school policy enacted in Illinois is a product of bipartisan work in committees and on the floor of the House and the Senate.

Like educators themselves, legislators who focus most intently on school policy seem motivated solely by the desire that their efforts contribute to the learning progress of the students and the effective practices of schools and educators. (The only major exceptions are bills with high price tags. They cause partisan tiffs.)

Bob Haisman has a message for you. You remember Bob, of course, the former Illinois Education Association president who is now "retired" to a life of continued advocacy for schools and educators and children. Some of Bob's more poignant rants have been repeated right here in an ISNS issue.

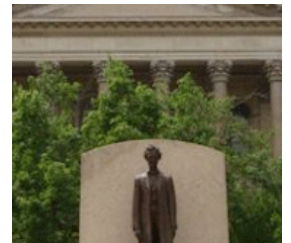
Bob saw last week as particularly troubling, what with the separation of children from their parents at the southern border of the country, the 5-4 U.S. Supreme Court rulings on public employee unions (the unions took a blow) and on President Trump's "racist" Muslim Travel Ban, and news of a mass murder of journalists.

I received Bob's message by email and I have [posted it on this web page](#). He invites you to visit his Facebook page, read his blog posts, "Debate me if you wish," but get prepared to cast an informed vote in November.

The elections will be unusually important in 2018, and as Bob says, "November will be here before you blink an eye!!"

Yesterday was the 166th anniversary of one of the most eloquent Fourth of July speeches in history. Yes, yesterday, the Fifth of July, was the anniversary of that remarkable oration by Frederick Douglass, who had been born into slavery but had escaped to freedom and later became a powerful force for abolition.

Douglass had been asked by fellow abolitionists, friends of his, to travel to Rochester, New York, and deliver the message. They thought he would be honored by the invitation. But he refused to speak on July 4. The symbol of non-black people's independence at that time was too painful for him, all things considered.



But he was willing to give an oration of national celebration on the following day, and such was his reputation as a great speaker that a large audience gathered for his 4th of July speech on July 5, 1852. Douglass was powerful in his praise of the nation. He held the audience spellbound for more than two hours.

Spellbound they were, yes, but also probably uncomfortable to hear Douglass make the irony clear, the irony of their request that he, a fugitive from slavery whose people were still mostly in human bondage, should honor the nation and its citizens for having wrested their own independence from England.

Douglass' words on that day in Rochester are still considered a profoundly important historical presentation. You are encouraged to read them at your leisure, to savor the power of their imagery and phrasing. You'll find a complete text of [his speech here](#). The passages below are [from this abridged version](#):

"What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence? Fellow-citizens, pardon me, allow me to ask, why am I called upon to speak here to-day? What have I, or those I represent, to do with your national independence?"

"Are the great principles of political freedom and of natural justice, embodied in that Declaration of Independence, extended to us? and am I, therefore, called upon to bring our humble offering to the national altar, and to confess the benefits and express devout gratitude for the blessings resulting from your independence to us?"

"Would to God, both for your sakes and ours, that an affirmative answer could be truthfully returned to these questions! Then would my task be light, and my burden easy and delightful... But, such is not the state of the case. I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us."

"I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary!"

"Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me."

"The sunlight that brought life and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. ..."

"This Fourth [of] July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak to-day? ..."

"Fellow-citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, to-day, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!"

"To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world. My subject, then fellow-citizens, is AMERICAN SLAVERY. ..."

"I shall see, this day, and its popular characteristics, from the slave's point of view. Standing, there, identified with the American bondman, making his wrongs mine, I do not hesitate to declare, with all my soul, that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this 4th of July!"

Why devote so much space and time to a 166-year-old speech? Because, Fellow-citizens, if Douglass were to return and make another July Fourth speech, it would be sadly similar, *conceptually*, to his 1852 oration. Douglass would deplore the shocking lack of progress in white acceptance of black Americans as citizens.

Do you think this is an exaggeration? Let me give you a couple of sources from Yale University (which I attended in the early 1960s with the United States Air Force picking up the tab; I was not in [this photo with JFK](#), but I was nearby).

This link is to the [first lecture in a 25-lecture course entitled](#) "American History: From Emancipation to the Present," presented in 2012 by Dr. Jonathan Holloway, Dean of Yale College (more recently appointed Provost at Northwestern University). Sure, it's a long course, but Holloway is meticulous and enjoyable.

Another [great playlist is for a course](#) entitled "Capital Punishment: Race, Poverty, & Disadvantage" by Prof. Stephen B. Bright, who explains capital crime law and its dynamics in multiple states with great clarity. While Bright maintains a scholarly demeanor, the facts he documents should provoke your anger.

You may want a shorter version, perhaps just a brief characterization of these courses. Holloway's course deals with challenges faced by black Americans in the broadest sense. Emancipation was followed by a brief (12-year) period of "[Reconstruction](#)," in which promises were made and, one by one, broken.

Briefly, white control of the southern states was restored in 1877 and policy was initiated to return black citizens to a status virtually the same as they had endured during slavery. "Jim Crow" laws, segregation in all settings, incarceration and "leasing" them back to plantations, lynchings - it was bleak for decades.

Segregation assured by [Plessy v. Ferguson](#) in 1896 was not overturned until [Brown v. Board of Education](#) in 1954. The multiple ways in which black citizens have been beaten down, intimidated and deprived of opportunity are too numerous to recite. (Not wanting to believe something does not make it untrue.)

Prof. Bright's presentations on capital punishment provide an in-depth look at just one of the many injustices heaped upon black Americans. Example: A map showing concentrations of capital cases and executions follows closely the boundaries of southern confederate states. Injustice is still a vestige of slavery.

You don't have to be as old as I am to have seen, in your lifetime, egregious circumstances in which black Americans *still find themselves*, the unfairness, the deprivations that seem consciously imposed. Sure, there are some countries with even worse civil rights records - but that fact should not make us proud.

Speaking of really old people, today is my birthday. It was exactly 75 years ago that I was born in St. Louis. (I grew up in East St. Louis, which is where I acquired an intense interest in race relations and saw first-hand many circumstances that convinced me that, had I been born black, I would have been a rebel. In that case, the white police might have done to me what they seem too often do to black rebels. I'd probably have been shot dead long ago.)

As you'll recall, I began a conversation last year about the future of ISNS (if any) after I no longer have a future. Let me give you a brief update. Thanks to my "no excuses" policy of treadmilling (2.0 miles per day, minimum), I seem healthier now than I have been in years. I still am determined to talk with some folks who've expressed an interest in taking over ISNS when I'm no longer competent (You'll tell me when?), the issue no longer seems urgent.

Speculation: You may have to put up with me for another three years, maybe even five.

Meanwhile, as I continue to focus on school policy as it is enacted and implemented in Illinois - and on subjects brought to me by subscribers - I will also want to expound before I reach my dotage on broader subjects that seem to me to be very relevant to the education of all learners, curious folks of all ages. As always, documentation will be provided. You may often wish to disagree but your thoughts will be provoked. You should not be bored.

Links to newsletters posted so far this year are available [at this RECENTLY CHANGED web page link](#). Please remember that *current* ISNS archives are for our subscribers only; *do not share this link*. Also, all 2017 issues can be found [HERE](#). You *may share the 2017 archives web page link* with anyone who wants to see it.

The only way to contact me: Use the link below. As soon as you "submit" your message, it is sent to me by email. 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 inputs - questions, comments, suggestions - are valued. For twenty-three years ISNS has been guided by wisdom "from the field." To contribute in this way, just [click this link to our contact form](#).