

From the desk of

ANDREW CHESNEY

ILLINOIS STATE SENATOR | 45TH DISTRICT

Dear Neighbor,

I hope you are having a great summer and that this newsletter finds you and your family well.

The 2023 spring legislative session marked a return to normal, with over 7,000 bills, resolutions and constitutional amendments filed by lawmakers. Of these, only about half saw any movement, and less than 600 were approved and sent to the Governor for final action.

As your State Senator, I made sure the values and priorities of Northwest Illinois were heard during policy discussions, and as I have done in the past, I did not support any tax or fee increases that would add to the already-excessive financial burden you carry. I continued to advocate for a fair system of checks and balances within state government, while sponsoring several legislative initiatives that improve circumstances for the people of the 45th District.

This end-of-session report highlights my legislative initiatives for the 2023 session year, and I am listed as a sponsor or co-sponsor of every initiative you will read about in the following pages. It is a privilege to serve as your State Senator, and my office is always available to assist you with issues you may be having with state agencies. Never hesitate to call or email my office if my staff or I can be of service.

Best,



State Senator Andrew Chesney
45th District



CHESNEY SPONSORS LEGISLATION THAT BACKS MEN AND WOMEN IN BLUE

In recent years, a series of bills have been enacted that interfere with police officers' ability to do their jobs effectively and safely. Crime remains high in Illinois, and many sworn officers have left the profession. This year I partnered with two of my colleagues to file legislation creating the "Fund the Police" Act.

Senate Bill 1858 would create the Fund the Police Act, and allocate funds toward grants to assist with hiring, rehiring, and retention of police officers, funding for body camera mandates, and for training, outreach, and community policing activities.

The Act would also provide funding to assist with mental health treatment for individuals in county jails, and for mental health care for law enforcement officers. Additionally, it would provide for the purchase of public safety equipment designed to prevent gang violence, motor vehicle theft, vehicular hijacking, or the sale of illegal items.

While this legislation did not advance this year, we will continue pushing for its passage. (Sen. Chesney chief co-sponsor, 3/30/23)

CHESNEY CHAMPIONS MEASURES THAT ADDRESS TEACHER SHORTAGE



Illinois continues to struggle with a teacher shortage, and this year two bills advanced that should help with the recruitment and retention of good teachers. Bills I co-sponsored that have now been signed into law include:

House Bill 3801 adjusts licensing requirements for schools that have been traditionally hard to staff, with teacher retention bonuses for educators that are National Board Certified. These highly-qualified teachers will receive \$4,000 bonuses in two consecutive

years. (Sen. Chesney, co-sponsor, 5/11/23)

House Bill 3442 expands the timeframe and circumstances for when a school can employ a substitute teacher when a primary teacher is not available. The substitute contract is renewable in 30-day increments. (Sen. Chesney, co-sponsor, 5/11/23)

PROTECTING KIDS FROM FURTHER TRAUMA WHEN TESTIFYING IN COURT

Children under the age of 13 who are victims of abuse will soon avoid further trauma by being able to testify remotely during criminal trials. **House Bill 2607** changes state laws to allow child victims of abuse to provide court testimony via closed circuit television, allowing them to avoid being in the same room as their abuser during a trial. Current law provides for remote testimony in a narrow set of circumstances, but this new law would make the practice the norm. I was proud to co-sponsor this initiative. (Sen. Chesney, co-sponsor, 5/9/23)

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TAKING CARE OF SENIORS AND THE DISABLED



At a time when majority party legislative priorities are misplaced and askew, this year two bills that improve the care of seniors and people living with developmental disabilities received unanimous support. I was a co-sponsor of both.

Senate Bill 855 was filed in response to the uncovering of repeated abuse and cover-ups of abuse at the Choate Mental Health Facility in downstate Anna, Illinois. Choate workers have been criminally charged 14 times in recent years with crimes ranging from physical abuse of residents to obstructing official probes and lying to investigators. Through **SB 855**, information about obstructing an investigation must now be included in Department of Human Service Inspector General reports.

The bill also prohibits any facility that is licensed, funded, or certified by the Department of Public Health from employing any person who is listed in an Inspector General report as having been found to have committed an act of physical abuse, sexual abuse, financial exploitation, serious neglect, or obstruction of an investigation of an allegation of the crimes mentioned. (Sen. Chesney, co-sponsor, 3/29/23)

Senate Bill 2322 ensures that individuals living in assisted living, memory care, and other long-term health facilities can designate a primary and secondary essential support person who will have access to the resident despite general visitation restrictions. The need for this law was made clear during the COVID-19 pandemic, when people in these facilities were prohibited from having face-to-face contact with their loved ones.

The legislation also requires the Department of Public Health to establish a statewide policy for visitation for residents that includes indoor, outdoor, and virtual visitation during public health emergencies, and requires the Office of State Long Term Care Ombudsman to identify and investigate complaints relative to violations of the provisions. (Sen. Chesney, chief co-sponsor, 3/10/23)

CHESNEY PUSHES FOR LAWS TO COMBAT FENTANYL EPIDEMIC



Fentanyl, when properly prescribed by a licensed medical professional, is an effective, powerful pain killer. But when it hits the street drug market and is hidden in other drugs, it is deadly. According to the most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), between 2019 and 2021 deaths in Illinois due to synthetic opioids grew by an alarming 36%. Federal investigators even believe this number, while startling, represents an under-count because of incomplete data.

This spike in usage and deaths is not limited to Illinois' most urban areas. Rural counties like those in the 45th District are also seeing a disturbing number of deaths due to fentanyl-laced drugs. In an effort to combat this crisis, this year I co-sponsored a bill that would provide individuals with access to fentanyl detection strips at pharmacies and retail stores.

House Bill 3203 passed in both chambers and allows pharmacists or retailers to sell fentanyl test strips over the counter to the public to test drugs for the presence of fentanyl. (*Sen. Chesney, co-sponsor, 3/30/23*)

Senate Bill 73 would update the statutes to state that any person unlawfully selling or dispensing any scheduled drug containing a detectable amount of fentanyl is guilty of a Class X felony. It also would provide for a Class I felony for an individual to use an electronic communication device in the selling of drugs containing fentanyl. Unfortunately, this bill did not move during the spring session, but my colleagues and I will continue pushing for its passage. (*Sen. Chesney, co-sponsor, 3/20/23*)

HELPING OUR FOUR-LEGGED FRIENDS



I have always been a voice for the humane treatment of animals, and this year I co-sponsored a few bills that help ensure our four-legged friends are not subjected to inhumane or abusive practices.

Senate Bill 1882 prohibits testing facilities from engaging in toxicological experiments involving dogs and cats, and will ensure a safer environment for these animals. (*Sen. Chesney, chief co-sponsor, 3/8/23*)

Senate Bill 1230 builds on legislation I passed in 2021 (HB 1711) that bans puppy mills, and closes a loophole that some bad actors used to sidestep the law against selling puppy mill puppies at pet stores. Specifically, the legislation changes the definitions of "dog dealer" and "animal shelter" to close a loophole some pet shop operators use to avoid getting dogs from animal shelters. It would help Illinois become fully compliant with the legislation I sponsored in 2021, the Humane Pet Store Law (Public Act 102-0586). While this bill did not advance during the spring session, I will continue to push for its adoption. (*Sen. Chesney, chief co-sponsor, 3/23/23*)

SENATOR CHESNEY STANDS UP FOR VETERANS

A primary role of government is to take care of those who require assistance or who cannot take care of themselves. This responsibility is especially important for our veterans, who answered a call to serve, and who often struggle when they return to civilian life. Two important bills I co-sponsored that passed this year aim to help our veterans in important ways.

Senate Bill 1376 provides homeless veterans will special consideration when agencies determine an individual's eligibility for state or federal benefits such as housing or rental assistance, job training, and employment opportunities. (*Sen. Chesney, chief co-sponsor, 2/23/23*)

House Bill 925 adds an additional layer of protection to veterans by establishing a process for veteran service organizations to obtain a state charter. The charter will only be granted if the organization is formed by and for veterans with a board comprised of mostly veterans and if other requirements are met. (*Sen. Chesney, chief co-sponsor, 5/11/23*)

VISIT SPRINGFIELD!

I enjoy spending time with District 45 students and families when they visit the State Capitol. If your family or school group will be visiting Springfield while the legislature is in session, please let my Springfield office know so I can say hello and talk with you.



STATE SENATOR ANDREW CHESNEY

45TH DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



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COMMON SENSE LEGISLATION IMPROVES POLICE RESPONSE TIMES FOR CARJACKINGS

Carjackings are becoming all-too common across Illinois, and when a car is stolen, police are often limited in their ability to track the location of the stolen vehicle. Legislation I co-sponsored passed this year that provides police and sheriffs' departments with a new valuable tool to help apprehend the criminals and return vehicles to their rightful owners.

House Bill 2245 allows law enforcement to access real-time tracking information from vehicle GPS systems. It requires car manufacturers to establish a 24/7 hotline for reporting carjackings, and unlocking pin-point tracking data so criminals can be easily tracked. (*Sen. Chesney, co-sponsor, 5/5/23*)

CAPPING COSTS FOR EPIPENS

When a severe allergic reaction occurs, minutes matter. Symptoms can come on rapidly and can worsen quickly. For many who have severe allergies, EpiPens can mean the difference between life and death. A bill that will soon be signed into law will cap the cost of EpiPens so individuals who need the life-saving medication are not deterred due to the cost.

Today a twin pack can cost anywhere from \$500-\$700, but **House Bill 3639** places a \$60 cap on medically necessary epinephrine twin-packs. Once signed into law, this important legislation will remove a huge financial burden from families that need to keep multiple EpiPens nearby for medical emergencies. (*Sen. Chesney, co-sponsor, 5/11/23*)

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