

December 2022

Next month, January of 2023, the Illinois General Assembly will conduct a “lame duck” session, and it will begin its regular 2023 legislative session. Important and deeply concerning matters related to life will likely come to the floor in both of these sessions.

Even – and especially! – before these sessions begin, you as a Christian citizen can contact those who represent you in both houses of the legislature, the House of Representatives and the Senate, by email or telephone. A message could be as simple as to indicate that *you and your family are pro-life citizens and voters in Illinois, and that you urge your representatives to protect the unborn and provide no support to any legislative measures that enable abortion, the killing of unborn babies.* (At this point, you need not refer to particular bill numbers or titles; such information is unknown to this writer at present.) This information is valid and important for all members of the legislature, regardless of their party affiliations or their past voting record on these matters.

To identify your House and Senate members (for some seats, there may be a change from those leaving office, who will be involved in the lame duck session, to new incoming members for the 2023 legislative session), see the last page of this document. This page also provides help for filing a “witness slip” when the session starts and a specific bill on which you may want to comment comes under consideration by a House or Senate committee.

During the lame duck session (Jan. 4-7, 10, and possibly until noon on Jan. 11), consideration quite likely will be given to removing the current restriction which holds that all surgical abortions in Illinois must be performed by licensed physicians. Permitting advanced practice nurses, physicians’ assistants, and even midwives to perform surgical abortions is seen as desirable by those who want to enhance Illinois’ reputation as an “abortion destination.” Presently, the number of physicians is thought insufficient to meet the amount of demand from both Illinois women who seek abortions and others who travel to our state for abortions. Changing the present restriction would put the women at further risk by loosening the training and experience requirements for those who perform abortions on them, in addition of course to ending the lives of still more unborn babies here in Illinois.

Another measure that may come to the lame duck session, or perhaps the legislature’s new 2023 session, would be to increase the state budget to provide funding for travel, lodging and meals of women who journey to Illinois for abortions. Temporary Medicaid cards might also be funded from the state budget to pay for the abortions. Federal Medicaid will not pay for the vast majority of abortions, but Illinois taxpayers may end up doing so for abortions in this state.

The new legislative session will begin at noon on Wednesday, January 11. On the whole, the pro-life cause will likely face a steeper climb among the members of the 2023 General Assembly. The legislature will probably entertain a move to propose an amendment to the Illinois constitution that would define a fundamental right to abortion in this state. If proposed by a three-fifths majority in both houses of the legislature in 2023, the proposed amendment would go before voters statewide for ratification in November, 2024. If abortion were to be recognized as a fundamental right in the state constitution, it would prove difficult if not impossible ever to reinstate parental notification prior to an abortion on a minor, or to require licensing for abortion clinics. Such a constitutional amendment would stand out in importance. It would reduce the potential for any kind of protection of the unborn in this state still more.

The new legislative session may also see proposals for regulation of crisis pregnancy centers.

A relatively new specter on the horizon is the prospect that the 2023 General Assembly may consider making an allowance for assisted suicide in Illinois. Legislators long familiar with debates on abortion may not have so great a grasp of what their constituents think about this related life matter. Now could be a good time to inform them.

With respect to schools, a number of concerns may present themselves:

- Government reprisals for churches or parochial schools that engage in “conversion therapy” for members or pupils with homosexual or transsexual “identities.” It could be construed as conversion therapy even if teenagers say “I’m thinking about this,” and a pastor or teacher cautions them against it. Schools may lose access to “Invest in Kids” funding, while churches may lose their tax-exempt status. A measure to this effect in 2022 did not come before the Senate, but it passed in the House.
- The state now requires public schools to teach sex education according to standards that call for offering instruction on abortion and LGBT relationships at early ages, unless the school district or individual parents deliberately opt out. A similar requirement could be made general, so as to include private and parochial schools.
- Illinois parochial schools could be required to follow the “Human Right Act” concerning public accommodations (restrooms, etc.), or lose access to “Invest in Kids” funding.
- Another proposal that passed the House but not the Senate in 2022 sought to require that if Public Health enacts emergency rules for religious schools regarding diseases like COVID or influenza, any complaint from a citizen challenging the way schools handle these would go to the regional superintendent of public schools, and not to Public Health. This would be a first, as superintendents of public schools would be making decisions for religious schools.
- Another proposal floated in 2022 was to prohibit all schools, including parochial schools, from disciplining students for their activities outside of school. Should the state determine for religious schools what they can and cannot regard as causes for discipline?

FINDING YOUR LEGISLATORS USING THE ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF ELECTIONS - WWW.ELECTIONS.IL.GOV

To find your current state legislators (in until January 11th) and to also find your newly elected state legislators (who start on January 11th):

Go to www.elections.il.gov

Under Voter Services, Click Find My Elected Officials

Click "To find my elected officials" highlighted in blue

Click the Illinois map

Click OK on the pop up box

Type in your address on the upper right box

Your list of elected officials is available on the right column

The information will show 2022 State Senator and 2022 State Representative – they are yours now and until January 11th. The information that just says State Senator and State Representative are your "new" legislators starting January 11th for the next two years.

How To File A Witness Slip Online

1 Go to the **Illinois General Assembly Web** site at <http://www.ilga.gov/>.

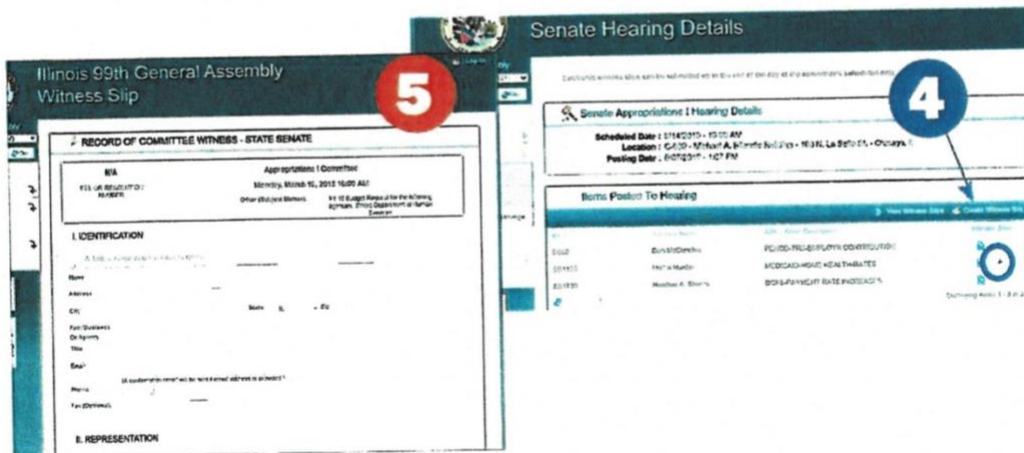
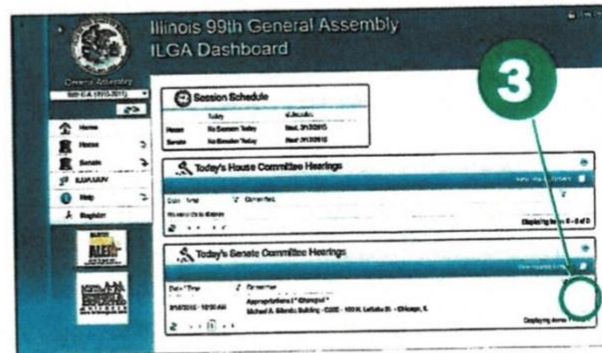
2 Once there, look to the lower left, under **Reports & Inquiry** and click on **GA Dashboard**.

Select either **Senate or House tab** located under the State seal, then select **Committee Hearings** from the drop-down menu.

3 Select the chosen committee by clicking on the paper icon on the far right.

4 Choose a bill and look to the right. Under **Witness Slips**, there are two icons. **Click on the pencil and paper icon** to create your Witness Slip

5 Fill out and submit witness slip.



⇒ Once you are at Step :5 fill in your information and put "self" in three fields for individuals completing the form:

- firm/business
- title
- persons, groups, firms represented in this appearance.

⇒ Under position, click if you support or oppose the bill.

⇒ Under testimony. click "record of appearance only." This is for people who are not testifying in front of the committee and who are not giving written testimony.

⇒ Click "I agree to the ILGA terms of agreement"

⇒ Click button Create (slip).

For a video version of this information, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQ1PbTuR7Fk>