

With the start of the New Year, there is always a new set of laws to obey. State and local laws passed in the previous year go into effect. Governor J.B. Pritzker signed nearly 300 new laws that took effect on January 1, 2022, covering a range of issues big and small that affect Illinoisans. The year 2021 saw the state and local legislatures increase their lawmaking duties after the negative impact of the pandemic during 2020.

Here is a sampling of the laws passed by the Illinois General Assembly, with some of these new laws may affect you as a teenager or young adult.

Labor and Business

- Illinois is one of 21 states set to raise their minimum wage. The *Lifting Up Illinois Working Families Act* has raised the minimum wage several times, with the ultimate goal of lifting it to \$15 an hour. This year, the minimum wage will increase to \$12 per hour and \$9.25 an hour for workers under the age of 18 who work less than 650 hours per calendar year.
- In an effort to support local manufacturers, the bill requires state agencies and institutions to only purchase Illinois and American flags made in the United States.
- *Juneteenth* is the holiday that celebrates the end of slavery in the United States, becoming an official Illinois state holiday. To commemorate the abolition of slavery throughout the United States and its territories in 1865, Juneteenth will be recognized as *National Freedom Day* in Illinois.
- *Hayli's Law*, inspired by and named for 12-year-old Hayli Martinez, whose Kankakee lemonade stand was shut down by local health officials, says that lemonade stands and other stands selling non-alcoholic beverages operated by a person under the age of 16 can no longer be regulated or shut down by public health authorities.

Education

- Schools must teach and include contributions by Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhists, and any other collective community of faith that helped shape America in history curriculums. In addition, every elementary and high school to add a unit in instruction on the events and contributions of Asian Americans in Illinois and the U.S.
- Public school students shall be granted up to five days of excused absences for mental or behavioral health, with no medical note required.
- Public universities will now be required to permit students to choose whether they submit ACT and SAT scores when applying for admission.
- Students can now take one year of forensic speech and debate in high school as a substitute for music, art or foreign language requirements.

Combatting Discrimination

- Schools are banned from discriminating against student hairstyles associated with racial, ethnic and cultural traditions.
- Committing a crime against a person because of their actual or perceived citizenship or immigration status will now be considered a hate crime in the state of Illinois.

Consumer Protection

- Ends early termination fees for customers of telephone, cellphone, television, internet, energy, medical alert system or water services who die before the end of their contracts.
- More transparency on drug pricing, requiring pharmacies to post a notice informing consumers that they may request current pharmacy retail prices at the point of sale.
- The "Preventing Youth Vaping Act" aims to prevent vaping by children, placing additional restrictions on e-cigarettes, including imposing civil and criminal penalties.
- Provides that automatic renewal offers or continuous service offers online should provide a toll-free number, email or a postal address if the seller directly bills the consumer, or to provide another cost-effective way to cancel the service.

Law Enforcement

- The *Stalking/No Contact Order law* in Illinois has been amended to include a prohibition on contact made via email or social media.
- Significant changes to the Firearm Owner Identification (FOID) card system are new for 2022, including encouraging but not requiring fingerprinting. Those who agree to fingerprinting are granted streamlined processes for renewing FOID and CCL (Concealed Carry Licenses). The Illinois State Police will now have a public database of all guns reported stolen that can be checked prior to transferring any firearm to prevent inadvertent transfers of stolen weapons.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What law described above do you favor the most?

Why? _____

2. Describe a law that you would like to see passed in the upcoming years. _____