

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 over 180 new laws, with most taking effect on January 1, 2023, covering a range of big and small issues affecting Illinoisans.

Here is a sampling of the laws passed by the Illinois General Assembly, with some new laws that may affect you as a teenager or young adult. You may find the details of all new laws by visiting www.ilga.gov or searching the internet.

Labor and Business

- The minimum wage across Illinois will be increased on January 1 to \$13 an hour, except for workers younger than 18 years old working less than 650 hours per year, who will get a minimum of \$10.50 per hour. Workers who earn tips will get a minimum of \$7.80 per hour, but the employer must make up any shortfall from the \$13 per hour.
- The *Create a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair Act*, also known as the **CROWN Act**, prohibits employers from discriminating against employees because of race-based hairstyles and hair textures.

Education / Schools

- Middle and high school students will be allowed to miss one school day per year to attend a civic event. A **civic event** is an educational event sponsored by a non-profit organization or governmental entity or an artistic or cultural performance.
- Students entering high school in the 2023-2024 school year must complete at least one year of computer science. This is a graduation requirement.
- This new law states that “safe gun storage” instruction must be added to the state’s safety education curriculum in “all grades.”
- The course content and learning standards for driver’s education will be based on the national Novice Teen Driver Education and Training Administrative Standards.
- School boards must, no later than July 1, 2025, establish a career and technical education pathway program for students in grades 6 through 12.

Supporting Mental Health

- Schools can establish wellness checks for students in the 7th grade through 12th grades. These wellness checks aim to identify and help students at risk of mental health conditions—some examples of these conditions include depression or anxiety.
- A law that addresses mental health says that Illinois’ “Comprehensive Health Education Program” must include information and education about how and where to find mental health resources and specialized treatment in the state.

- Illinois insurance must cover medically necessary mental health care. This includes treatment for mental, emotional, nervous, or substance use disorders.

Consumer Protection

- The state’s *Smoke Detector Act* requires smoke detectors must have a self-contained, non-removable, long-term battery if not connected to an alarm system.
- A new law bans latex gloves for handling and preparing food, as well as for emergency responders like paramedics, thus making it safer for people with latex allergies to eat and receive emergency medical care.

Law Enforcement

- The state of Illinois will not use a cash **bail** system anymore under the *SAFE-T Act*. Illinois was set to eliminate cash bail for defendants awaiting criminal trials. When someone is arrested for a crime, a judge can decide whether that person is eligible to be released from jail as their case plays out if they post a certain amount of money. That amount (bail) is paid to ensure the defendant will continue showing up for their court hearings and eventual trial if the case gets that far. In late December 2022, a judge ruled the policy unconstitutional, meaning it will not take effect now in the 65 counties that took part in the lawsuit.
- A new law will add community service as a penalty for failing to stop for a school bus that is “receiving or discharging pupils and has displayed visual signals” or for speeding over 20 miles per hour or more in a school zone.

State Symbols and Celebrations

- *Dolostone* has been officially designated as Illinois’ official state rock
- Under an amendment to the state’s Designation Act, the *Eastern Milksnake* will become the official snake of the state of Illinois.
- August 1st has been designated “*Sweet Corn Appreciation Day*” in Illinois to celebrate the food’s importance to agriculture and to recognize family farmers.

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. _____