Highlights of Newly-Elected Legislators

The members of the 97th Illinois General Assembly will be sworn into office in mid-January. As a service to our members, the Illinois Municipal League staff has compiled brief biographies of some new members.

Illinois State Representatives:

Daniel Biss, D-Skokie, 17th District

- Replaces long-time Statehouse Republican legislator Beth Coulson who ran for Congress.
- Ran against six-term incumbent Beth Coulson in 2008.
- Earned his undergraduate degree from Harvard University and his doctorate from MIT.
- Serves on the Evanston Environment Board and the steering committee of Our Climate Matters.
- Has worked as a teacher, university researcher and political organizer.
- Served as a policy advisor to Governor Pat Quinn focusing on transparency and ethical reform.
- Married with two children.
- Wife is a former Peace Corps volunteer and is working on her PhD in history at Northwestern University.

Adam Brown, R-Decatur, 101st District

- Replaces Representative Bob Flider, D-Mt. Zion.
- Graduated from Warrensburg-Latham High School, Richland Community College, and the University of Illinois-Urbana.
- Currently working towards his Master's Degree in Public Administration from UIS-Springfield.
- Served as the commencement speaker at Richland Community College.
- At age 23 was the youngest person ever elected to the Decatur City Council.
- Currently serving in his first term on the Decatur City Council.
- Recognized as one of the Central Illinois Business Journal's Top 20 under 40.
- Employed as a fifth generation farmer.
- Received the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Spot Award for dedication to service.

Kelly Burke, D-Evergreen Park, 36th District

- Replaces Representative Michael Carberry who was appointed to a vacancy when long-time Democrat Jim Brosnahan resigned.
- Has lived in Evergreen Park for 17 years.
- Graduated from Saint Thomas More Grammar School & Saint Ignatius College Prep.
- Received a B.A. from the University of Illinois-Urbana & law degree from John Marshall.
- Served as a law clerk for two Circuit Court Judges.
- Served as a legislative aide to former State Representative Andy McGann.
- Practiced law for 14 years focusing on family and insurance law.
- Employed as an attorney on the staff of Saint Xavier University.
- Twice elected to the Evergreen Park Library Board and is currently President.
- Married with three children.

Bill Cunningham, D-Chicago, 35th District

- Ran for the seat vacated by long-time Democrat House member Kevin Joyce.
- Attended St. Barnabas Elementary School & Mt. Carmel High School.
- Received a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Illinois-Chicago.
- Served as Communications Director for former Cook County Sheriff Mike Sheahan for 16 years & as Chief of Staff to current Cook County Sheriff, Tom Dart.
- Worked at the Sheriff's office overseeing efforts to halt wrongful evictions in mortgage foreclosure cases.
- Worked with a state commission to draft new cemetery laws and regulations in the wake of the recent Burr Oak Cemetery scandal.
- Married with two children.

Robyn Gabel, D-Evanston, 18th District

- Appointed as a State Representative after Statehouse veteran Democrat Representative Julie Hamos was named Illinois Secretary of Health and Human Services by Governor Quinn.
- Committee assignments include Appropriations-Human Services; Environment & Energy; Health & Healthcare Disparities; Insurance; and Mass Transit.
- Received a B.A. in Anthropology from Beloit College, an M.S. in Public Health from the University of Illinois-Chicago, & a M.J. in health law from Loyola University Chicago Law School.
- Served as a legislative assistant to then Chicago Alderman Luis Gutierrez.
- Employed as the Executive Director of the Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition for over 20 years.
- Helped develop the KidCare health insurance program for over 200,000 children and pregnant women.
- Helped pass the All Kids Program, giving every child in Illinois access to quality, affordable healthcare.

David Harris, R-Arlington Heights, 55th District
- Replaces one term Representative Mark Walker, D-Arlington Heights.
- Native of Mt. Prospect & a graduate of St. Viator High School.
- Received a B.A. from Georgetown University.
- Member of the Illinois House from 1983-1992.
- Adjutant General (Commanding General) of the Illinois National Guard from 1999-2003.
- Deputy Director and Chief of Staff of the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office with the U.S. Department of State.
- Retired from the military after 33 years with the rank of Major General.
- Former Senior Vice-President of the Illinois Hospital Association.
- Served as the Military Analyst for WGN-TV in Chicago.
- Married with two sons and raised his family in Arlington Heights.

Chad Hayes, R-Catlin, 104th District
- Replaces long-time Danville Republican legislator Bill Black.
- Catlin native that graduated from Catlin High School, Danville Area Community College and SIU-Carbondale.
- Served two terms as the Catlin Mayor, seven years as the Chair of the Vermilion County Mayor's Council, and as a former Chair of the Catlin Zoning Board of Appeals.
- Chairman of the Catlin Recreation Complex which won a 2003 Governor's Hometown Award.
- Employed as a Vice-President of Provena United Samaritans Medical Center/Foundation.
- Married with three children.

Dwight Kay, R-Glen Carbon, 112th District
- Replaces long-time Statehouse member Jay Hoffman, D-Collinsville.
- Previously was a candidate for State Representative in 2008.
- Graduated from Taylor University with B.A. in Political Science & Business Administration.
- Former Chairman of the National Automobile Transporters Association Claims Council.
- Employed as a Vice-President of Cassens Transport.
- Married with two children.

Tom Morrison, R-Palatine, 54th District
- Defeated Representative Suzi Bassi in the Republican primary.
- Grew up as the son of a printer.
- His parents help found Christian Liberty Academy of Arlington Heights in 1969.
- Earned a B.A. from Hillsdale College & worked as a beat and sports reporter in college.
- Served as an intern at WGN-AM radio in Chicago & later employed as a radio new reporter and anchor in Dubuque, Iowa.
- Taught fifth grade for six years at the Christian Liberty Academy.
- Started a SERVPRO franchise, a disaster cleanup and restoration company based in Elk Grove.
- Married with two children.

Rich Morthland, R-Rock Island County, 71st District
- Replaces long-time Statehouse legislator Mike Boland, who did not seek re-election and was a candidate for Lt. Governor in the Democratic primary.
- Born and raised in Rock Island County.

- Received a B.A. in Communications from St. Ambrose University, a master's degree in a Communications related field in Denver, Colorado, and is currently pursuing an M.A. in Communications from Spring Arbor University.
- Served as District One representative of the Rock Island County Board.
- Employed as a farmer and as a speech communications instructor at Black Hawk College in Moline, Scott Community College and Ashford University in Clinton, Iowa.
- Married with two daughters.
- He and his wife have twice traveled abroad to the Czech Republic to serve as English teachers.
- His wife is an Assistant Professor of Health Information Management at Black Hawk College.

Michelle Mussman, D-Schaumburg, 56th District

- Defeated Republican Ryan Higgins for the opportunity to replace Democrat Representative Paul Froehlich who chose not to run for re-election.
- First-time candidate for public office.
- Ran on a Mom on a Mission Theme to Clean Up Springfield.
- Graduated from the University of Cincinnati with a B.S. in Design.
- Former President and Treasurer of the Schaumburg PTA.
- Involved with the Schaumburg Township Council of PTAs which encompasses 27 local PTAs.
- Married with three children.
- Husband is a high school AP History teacher and theater director.

Chris Nybo, R-Elmhurst, 41st District

- Replaces Statehouse veteran Republican Representative Bob Biggins.
- Lifelong resident of the Western Suburbs.
- Graduated from Fenwick High School, as Phi Beta Kappa from Dartmouth College & from the University of Chicago Law School.
- Serves as an Alderman for the City of Elmhurst.
- Vice-Chairman of the Public Affairs and Safety Committee for Elmhurst.
- Recognized by U.S. Government for his commitment to public service.
- Employed as an attorney assisting large and small businesses on employment matters.
- Married with two children.

Sue Rezin, R-Morris, 75th District

- Replaces Democratic State Representative Careen Gordon.
- Lifelong resident of Morris.
- Graduated from Augustana College with a degree in International Business and Political Science with a minor in Hispanic Studies.
- Formerly employed as a marketing manager in Chicago.
- Employed as a Manager of a family real estate company for 15 years.
- Wants to reduce state elected officials' salaries by 10%.
- Served on a local school board and coached volleyball for 12 years.
- Serves as the Vice-President of the Morris Hospital Foundation, as a Board Member and past Vice-President for the Community Foundation of Greater Grundy County, and as a member of Senator Gary Dahl's Charity Foundation Board since 2004.
- Inducted into the 2009 Illinois Lincoln Series, which honors philanthropic work and community dedication.
- Married and has four children.

Wayne Rosenthal, R-Morrisonville, 98th District

- Replaces Betsy Hannig, D-Litchfield.
- Graduated from the University of Illinois at Springfield with a B.A. in Math.
- Owner/Operator of Family Farm since 1990 & of a Wild Rural Park Hunting Preserve.
- Retired Brigadier General for the Illinois National Guard.
- Past Morrisonville School Board member.
- Trustee with the Lincoln Land Community College Board of Trustees.
- Director of Palmer-Morrisonville Recreation Association & the Macoupin County Soil & Water District.
- Married with three sons.

Joe Sosnowski, R-Rockford, 69th District

- Grew up in Carol Stream & graduated from Northern Illinois University in DeKalb.
- Served as a City of DeKalb Alderman.
- In DeKalb was employed as a property manager for student apartments.
- Elected as an Alderman in Rockford in 2005 and was re-elected in 2009.
- Currently serves as the Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee for Rockford.
- Received the Rockford Chamber of Commerce's 2008 40 Under 40 Award which honors young regional readers.
- Holds a State of Illinois Real Estate License.
- Employed as the Director of Institutional Advancement at Rockford Christian Schools.
- Married with three children.
- His wife is an attorney with Barrick, Switzer, Long, Baisley and Van Evera, a Rockford law firm.

Michael Unes, R-East Peoria, 91st District
- Replaces long-time Statehouse veteran Mike Smith, D-Canton.
- Member of East Peoria City Council.
- Employed by a large accounting firm.
- Graduate of Bradley University.
- Married with four children.

Ann Williams, D-Chicago, 11th District
- Replaces retiring Representative John Fritchey.
- One of the first recipients of the Public Interest Scholarship at Drake University Law School.
- Clerked at the Legal Assistance Foundation, Women's Law Project.
- Volunteer attorney for Pro Bono Advocates assisting victims of domestic violence obtain orders of protection.
- Staff attorney for the Illinois House Democrats.
- Chief Legislative Liaison and as an Assistant Attorney General for Attorney General Lisa Madigan.
- Liaison between state government and business for Wyeth, a pharmaceutical and consumer products firm.
- Serves on the Illinois Council against Handgun Violence & formerly was on the Board of Personal PAC, an advocacy organization committed to protecting a woman's right to choose.

Illinois State Senators:

Sam McCann, R-Carlinville, 49th District
- Replaces Senator Deanna Demuzio, D-Carlinville.
- Attended Lewis & Clark Community College and Blackburn College.
- Ten-year member of National, State & Local Association of Home Builders.
- Served on the Board of Directors of NHAB & Executive Committee as State Representative.
- Served on the 2004 General Assembly Joint Task Force for Indoor Air Quality (Mold Task Force).
- Member of the Illinois Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health, Advisory Board.
- Married with two children.

John Mulroe, D-Edison Park, 10th District
- Appointed in August of 2010 to replaced retired Senator James DeLeo.
- Defeated Chicago Republican Alderman Brian Doherty for the Senate seat.
- Received a BA in Accounting from Loyola University & graduated from the Loyola University School of Law.
- Member of the Chicago and Illinois State Bar Associations.
- Employed as a full-time attorney and is a Certified Public Accountant.
- Married with four children.

Suzi Schmidt, R-near Lake Villa, 31st District
- Replaces Senator Michael Bond, D-Grayslake.
- Graduate of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale & 30-year resident of unincorporated Lake Villa Township.
- Member of the Lake County Board since 1988 & Chairman since 2000.
- Current President of the Metro Counties & Executive Committee Member of the Lake County Municipal League.

- Lake County Forest Preserve Commissioner since 1988 & Lake Villa Township Trustee from 1985-1988.
- Married.