

Office of the Speaker of the House

The Speaker of the House of Representatives derives responsibility and influence over legislative activities through statutes, constitutional mandates and House rules of procedure. Chosen from among members of the House, the Speaker invites participation from a wide range of philosophies from members of both parties in determining a legislative agenda.

As the presiding officer of the House, the Speaker determines when the House will meet and what type of business it will conduct. As manager of debate on bills, resolutions and amendments, the Speaker is responsible for recognizing members, formally calling votes, deciding parliamentary issues and maintaining decorum in the House chambers.

The comprehensive duties of the office include managing all House offices, facilities, professional and clerical staff, custodians and security personnel. Administratively, the Speaker signs and authenticates all acts, proceedings, orders, writs, warrants and subpoenas issued by the House.

In organizing a party team to help ensure smooth operation of House proceedings, the Speaker selects the Majority Leader, Deputy Majority Leaders, Assistant Majority Leaders and a Majority Caucus Chair. The House Majority Leader, in turn, serves as party spokesperson and assists with the flow of legislation. In addition, the Speaker may appoint chairs and majority members of standing committees, which are the public forums of proposed legislation.

Traditionally, the Office of the Speaker of the House has a profound bearing on the effectiveness of Illinois government and citizen representation in the state.



Michael J. Madigan
Speaker of the House

Michael J. Madigan (Democrat) was re-elected Speaker of the House in January 2009, a position he has held since 1983, with the exception of the 89th General Assembly. He also has served as House Democratic Leader and House Majority Leader.

As Speaker, Madigan has worked to build consensus, bring equitable treatment to all regions of the state and reduce partisan disputes. He is a strong proponent of honest, efficient government and has fought to improve the quality of life for working families. In recent years, he has been particularly engaged on issues affecting Illinois consumers, including efforts to curtail predatory home lending and prevent price gouging by electric utility companies. In the current General Assembly, he has been at the forefront

of efforts to reform government ethics laws, toughen campaign finance regulations, and increase transparency and accountability. Independent surveys have named him an “outstanding” member of the Illinois Legislature.

Speaker Madigan was first elected as a delegate to the 1970 Constitutional Convention and then as a state Representative that same year. He was born April 19, 1942, in the district he now represents and graduated from the University of Notre Dame. He is a graduate of Loyola University School of Law and practices law in Chicago.

Madigan and his wife, Shirley, have three daughters, a son and two granddaughters. His daughter, Lisa, is the Illinois Attorney General. Mrs. Madigan serves as chair of the Illinois Arts Council, a gubernatorial appointment. Speaker Madigan has served as chair of the Democratic Party of Illinois since 1998.



Barbara Flynn Currie
Majority Leader

Barbara Flynn Currie (Democrat) became the first woman Majority Leader in the history of the General Assembly in 1997. As the second ranking House official, she works closely with the Governor and colleagues from both parties and all regions of the state to fashion solutions to the challenges facing Illinois.

Representative Currie is a 31-year veteran of the House. Her legislative accomplishments include sponsorship of the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit Act and the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. She initiated the state preschool funding program that provides all children with quality early learning opportunities.

Currie has worked to prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace and to improve access to state contracts for businesses owned by women and minorities. She also has sponsored legislation to protect Illinois' air and groundwater, prevent the abuse of nursing home residents, improve child-support enforcement and expand the protections of the Equal Pay Act.

Currie graduated from the University of Chicago, where she also earned a master's degree in political science. She serves on the board of directors of the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois and is a member of the Hyde Park Kiwanis Club, Women United for South Shore and the Sierra Club.

Representative Currie has two children and four grandchildren. Her late husband, David P. Currie, was a professor at the University of Chicago Law School.

Tom Cross (Republican) is serving his ninth term in the General Assembly. First elected in 1992, his current district includes northeastern Oswego Township in Kendall County, portions of Troy and Wheatland Townships in Will County, Plainfield Township in Will County, and five precincts in Naperville Township in DuPage County.

Representative Cross' election in 2003 as House Minority Leader gave him an opportunity to bring his collegial style to the forefront of the legislature. He believes that all members of the House should be part of the decision-making process and that the group as a whole can create better ideas than one person alone. He also believes that restoring voter confidence in government officials should be a top priority for all elected officials.

Cross is a graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University and received his J.D. degree from Cumberland Law School in Alabama. He practices law with Mahoney, Silverman and Cross in Joliet. Prior to working in private practice, he served eight years as a prosecutor in the Kendall County State's Attorney's office. He is a member of the Plainfield, Shorewood and Oswego Chambers of Commerce and the Oswego Optimist Club.

Representative Cross and his wife, Genie, live in Oswego with their two children.



Tom Cross
Minority Leader