

100th General Assembly Office of the Senate President

The Senate President is the presiding officer of the Illinois Senate, elected by the 59 members of the Senate to serve a two-year term. The Illinois Constitution, statutes and rules define the functions and responsibilities of the office.

The President appoints Senate members to standing committees and permanent and interim study commissions, designating one member as chair. The President also appoints the Majority Leader and Assistant Majority Leaders, who serve as officers of the Senate.

With the Speaker of the House, the Senate President shares primary responsibility for legislative procedures and operations. By strategically directing the flow of legislation, the President ultimately sets the pace of work in the Senate. The President is required to approve all vouchers for the expenditure of funds appropriated for use by the Senate and certify that all bills passed by the Senate are in accordance with Senate rules.

As chair of the Senate Operations Commission, the President oversees a seven-member management committee responsible for deciding Senate policy, hiring Senate employees, purchasing supplies, renting equipment, and maintaining the Senate chambers and office, among other duties.

In addition to presiding over the Senate, the President is the leader of the majority party in the Legislature's upper chamber. Likewise, the Senate Minority Leader, selected by the minority party and formally elected by all Senate members, speaks on behalf of the minority party. Responsibilities of the Senate Minority Leader include appointing members to serve on certain boards, commissions and standing committees, and selecting assistant leaders and staff.



John J. Cullerton
Senate President

John J. Cullerton (Democrat) has built a reputation over nearly 40 years in government as a keen negotiator focused on progress, bipartisanship and compromise in order to get results.

He began his service in the General Assembly in 1979 when he was elected to the Illinois House, where he served as Speaker Pro Tempore and Democratic Floor Leader. He was appointed to the Illinois Senate in 1991 and then elected the following year to represent the 6th Legislative District.

Early in his legislative career, he focused on traffic safety issues, sponsoring the state's first child safety and motorist seat belt laws that have now saved thousands of lives. As chairman of the Senate's Judiciary Committee, he worked on the independent Criminal Law Edit, Alignment and Reform

(CLEAR) Commission tasked with modernizing and clearing up confusing, duplicative and inconsistent criminal laws.

In 2009, Cullerton was elected Senate President by his colleagues. One of his first assignments was overseeing the historic impeachment trial of then Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

His tenure as Senate President has been marked by historic social and financial reforms including marriage equality, the end of the state's scandal-marred death penalty, McCormick Place workplace reforms and a constant focus on resolving the state's budget and debt problems.

Cullerton received both his undergraduate and law degrees from Loyola University in Chicago. He is a partner with the Chicago law firm of Thompson Coburn. Cullerton and his wife, Pamela, live in Chicago and have five children.

James F. Clayborne, Jr. (Democrat) was elected Senate Majority Leader in January 2009. First sworn in as a Senator representing the 57th Legislative District in 1995 to serve the remaining term of the late Sen. Kenneth Hall, Senator Clayborne was elected to a full term in 1996 and re-elected in November 2014.

Senator Clayborne is an active member of the Illinois State Board of Investment and the Autism Task Force. He was recognized as Legislator of the Year by the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association for four consecutive years, and received the Trailblazer Award from Minority Business Enterprise Input Committee of the Chicago Minority Supplier Development Council, Inc.

Clayborne was born Dec. 29, 1963, in St. Louis, Missouri, and raised in East St. Louis. After graduating from Tennessee State University in 1985, he earned his J.D. in 1988 from the University of Miami School of Law in Coral Gables, Florida. He served as an assistant state's attorney and a felony prosecutor in St. Clair County before practicing law in the private sector.

Senator Clayborne is a partner with the law firm of Clayborne, Sabo and Wagner, LLP, of Belleville. He has four sons and two granddaughters and resides in Belleville.



James F. Clayborne, Jr.
Senate Majority Leader



Christine Radogno
Senate Republican Leader

Christine Radogno (Republican) began serving her fifth term as the Illinois Senate Republican Leader in 2017. Leader Radogno is the first female Caucus Leader in Illinois General Assembly history, first elected by the body in 2009.

Leader Radogno represents the 41st Legislative District, with communities in DuPage, Will and Cook counties. She has been a member of the Senate since 1997.

Leader Radogno is a state budget expert leading the drive to stabilize the state's economy. During her tenure, Leader Radogno has been a key figure in negotiations that led to significant reforms in the state's workers' compensation laws; public employee pension reform to save taxpayers and protect the system's sustainability; restoring discipline and accountability to the state's borrowing and contracting practices; and ethics reforms.

A former social worker, Leader Radogno has shown her dedication to creating a responsible health care system in Illinois, including reform of the state's Medicaid system to improve services, cut costs and enact efficiencies.

Leader Radogno remains focused on improving the state's economy, working to bring stability and structural reforms that make Illinois competitive.

Senator Radogno received her bachelor's and master's from Loyola University Chicago. She and her husband, Nunzio, have adult children and five grandchildren.