

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 by 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 team to help ensure smooth operation of House proceedings, the Speaker selects the Majority Leader, Deputy Majority Leaders and Assistant Majority Leaders. The House Majority Leader serves as party spokesperson and assists with the flow of legislation. 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 2013, a position he has held since 1983, with the exception of the 89th General Assembly (1995-96). 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 work in a bipartisan manner to address Illinois' most pressing issues. He advocates for honest, efficient government and has fought to improve the quality of life for working families. Under his leadership, the legislature has enacted sweeping ethics laws, the first campaign finance limits in state history, and needed reforms to the state budget process and workers' compensation system. His work during the current General Assembly includes requiring universal background checks on potential gun buyers, continuing to pay down the state's backlog of bills, and passing pension reforms needed to stabilize the state's finances and the retirements of teachers and state employees.

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

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



Barbara Flynn Currie
Majority Leader

Barbara Flynn Currie (Democrat) is the first woman Majority Leader in the history of the General Assembly, a position she has held since 1997. As the second ranking House official, she works closely with the Governor and legislators from both parties and all regions of the state to address the challenges facing Illinois.

Representative Currie joined the Illinois House in 1979 and was most recently re-elected in November 2012. Her legislative accomplishments include sponsorship of the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit Act and the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. She has fought to protect those who blow the whistle on corrupt public officials, toughen revolving-door prohibitions on former state employees, and prohibit sexual harassment in the workplace. Representative Currie has sponsored legislation to allow online voter registration; protect juvenile court records; 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, the League of Women Voters, 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.

Jim Durkin (Republican) was elected House Minority Leader in August 2013. He served in the House from 1995 through 2002, when he became the Republican nominee for the U.S. Senate. He returned to the General Assembly in 2006 when he was elected to represent the 82nd District.

In 2008-09, Representative Durkin served as the ranking Republican on the House Special Investigative Impeachment Committee that recommended impeachment and removal from office for former Governor Blagojevich. In 2011, he led the charge to reform the College Illinois! prepaid tuition program. His efforts as chair of the College Illinois Recovery Task Force have helped bring stability to the program. Prior to being elected Minority Leader, Durkin served as an Assistant Minority Leader, was a member of the Illinois Task Force on Gang Violence, fought to protect children from sexual predators, and is a founding member of the Illinois Legislative Diabetes Caucus.

Durkin received his bachelor's degree from Illinois State University and his law degree from The John Marshall Law School. He is a former assistant Cook County state's attorney and assistant attorney general, and currently is a partner with the law firm of Arnstein and Lehr, LLP.

Representative Durkin lives in Burr Ridge with his wife, Celeste, and their four daughters.



Jim Durkin
Minority Leader