

Office of the Speaker of the House

The Speaker of the House of Representatives derives responsibility and influence over legislative activities through statutes, constitutional guidelines 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.

The Speaker performs as the Presiding Officer of the House, determining when the House will meet and what type of business it will conduct. Serving as “manager of debate” on bills, resolutions and amendments, the Speaker is responsible for recognizing members, formally calling a vote, 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 2007, 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 and bring equitable treatment to all regions of the state. In the 95th General Assembly, he has continued his work to reduce partisan disputes. His ongoing efforts include naming minority party members to chair House committees.

Madigan is a proponent of campaign and government ethics reforms 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. Independent surveys have named him an “outstanding” member of the Illinois Legislature.

Voters in the 22nd Representative District first elected Madigan as delegate to the 1970 Constitutional Convention and then as State Representative in November 1970. A graduate of Loyola University Law School, Speaker Madigan practices law in Chicago. He was born April 19, 1942, in the Southwest Side district he now represents. A lifelong resident of Chicago, he is a graduate of St. Ignatius High School and the University of Notre Dame.

In 1999, Speaker Madigan became one of the few lawmakers to serve alongside a child when his daughter, Lisa Madigan, was elected to the Illinois Senate from the 17th District. She now serves as the state’s Attorney General. Madigan and his wife, Shirley, have two other daughters, a son and a granddaughter.

In 1998, Madigan was elected chair of the Democratic Party of Illinois.



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 29-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 at-risk children with quality early learning experiences and the chance to reach their full potential. She has since sponsored the measure that extended preschool opportunities to all Illinois children.

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 groundwater, prevent abuse of nursing home residents and improve child-support enforcement.

Currie graduated with honors from the University of Chicago, where she also earned a master's degree in political science. A past vice president of the Chicago League of Women Voters, she serves on the board of directors of the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois. She also is a member of the Hyde Park Kiwanis Club, Women United for South Shore and the Sierra Club. Her late husband, David P. Currie, was a professor at the University of Chicago Law School.

Representative Currie has two children and four grandchildren.

Tom Cross (Republican) is serving his seventh 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 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.

Cross' election in 2003 as House Minority Leader gave him an opportunity to bring his collegial style to the forefront. 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.

Representative Cross is a graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University and received his J.D. degree from Cumberland Law School in Alabama. He is active in his community, having served on boards for the YMCA, Kendall County Mental Health Board and the Kendall County Foundation. He currently belongs to 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

Secretary of the Senate

Deborah J. Shipley (Democrat) was born June 6, 1957, in Springfield. She served as administrative assistant to former State Senator Joyce Holmberg from 1990 to 1993, and the late State Senator Grace Mary Stern from 1993 to 1995. She was the administrative assistant to the executive director of the Legislative Audit Commission from 1987 to 1990. She served as chief executive assistant to Senate President Emil Jones, Jr. from 1995 to 2007. Shipley was elected Secretary of the Senate for the 95th General Assembly on January 10, 2007.



Assistant Secretary of the Senate

Scott Kaiser (Republican) was born June 25, 1966, in Peoria. He received his B.A. degree in political science from Sangamon State University. He served as a legislative analyst on the Senate Republican staff from 1988 to 1996, and as deputy director of Legislative Affairs for Governor Jim Edgar. In 1999, he became assistant to the president of Southern Illinois University. He was first elected Assistant Secretary of the Senate in June 2004. He and his wife, Julie, have two children.



Clerk of the House

Mark E. Mahoney (Democrat) was born Nov. 20, 1967, in Springfield. He graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University with his B.A. degree in history/political science. He served as a legislative assistant to U.S. Rep. John W. Cox, Jr., from 1991 to 1993, and as chief legislative correspondent to U.S. Sen. Frank R. Lautenberg from 1993 to 1995. From 1997 to 2003, he served on Speaker Madigan's Issues Development staff, and from 2003 to 2004 he was chief of intergovernmental relations for the Department of Corrections. He was first elected Clerk of the House in February 2004. He and his wife, Grainne, have two children.



Assistant Clerk of the House

Bradley S. Bolin (Republican) was born April 15, 1964, in Anderson, IN. He received his B.A. degree in political science from Purdue University. He then served as a legislative analyst on the House Republican Staff from 1986 to 1997. He was first elected Assistant Clerk of the House in January 1997. He is married to the former Brittan Ramey, and they have one daughter.

