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ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN: HOUSE COMMITTEE APPROVES LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

Bill Updates Accessibility Guidelines & Improves Ability for Businesses to Comply

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that members of the House Judiciary-Civil Committee unanimously approved legislation to improve accessibility for people with disabilities in Illinois.

“People living with disabilities need equal access to their communities, including schools, parks and businesses,” Madigan said. “I appreciated the strong approval of committee members and urge House lawmakers to support this commonsense measure.”

Senate Bill 2956, initiated by Madigan and sponsored by Rep. Ann Williams, will update the Illinois Environmental Barriers Act (EBA). The EBA, which was enacted in 1985, authorizes the Attorney General’s Office to enforce accessibility laws which mandate that public buildings and multi-story housing units in Illinois must be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities. The legislation will amend the EBA to update state law with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act’s (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design. Madigan’s legislation streamlines the existing state statute so that architects can refer to one code in order to comply with both federal and state accessibility requirements.

“Being able to participate in your community should not be contingent upon your physical abilities,” said Williams. “This legislation is about equality, and I am proud to stand with Attorney General Madigan in support of equal access for all Illinois residents.”

In addition to the legislation, Madigan’s office is working with the Capital Development Board (CDB) to update the technical building regulations that correspond with the EBA, known as the Illinois Accessibility Code. Under current state law, the CDB must update the Illinois Accessibility Code to incorporate the new federal standards. Madigan’s office is working with the CDB and other stakeholders to ensure that SB 2956 reflects the anticipated changes to the Illinois Accessibility Code and aligns the state statute with the federal standards.

“Our members are committed to designs that inspire and are accessible to all, and SB 2956 will help architects ensure that projects meet both state and federal accessibility laws and regulations” said Dan Hohl, director of government affairs for the American Institute of Architects in Illinois. “The AIA appreciates the Attorney General’s efforts to support people with disabilities, which also improves access to good design for all Illinoisans.”

Changes to the Environmental Barriers Act under SB 2956 include:

- Updating definitions to conform with the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design and corresponding updates to the Illinois Accessibility Code;
- Replacing an outdated state standard for alterations with an easier-to-use standard that mirrors the ADA;
- Clarifying which version of the EBA and the Illinois Accessibility Code applies to new construction and alterations; and
- Updating the enforcement provisions to reflect the current emphasis on working with businesses to resolve issues and alleviate future barriers for individuals with disabilities.

The legislation will now move to the full Illinois House chamber for consideration.

Attorney General Madigan’s Disability Rights Bureau protects and advances the interests of people with disabilities in Illinois, and works with public and private entities seeking to comply with disability rights laws. The bureau receives complaints regarding noncompliance with state and federal accessibility laws and works to bring facilities into compliance with state and federal accessibility standards.

Complaints about accessibility can be submitted to Madigan's office [online](#), or by contacting her Disability Rights Bureau at (312) 814-5684 (Chicago) or (217) 524-2660 (Springfield).

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