

# TRAVIS WEAVER

State Representative | 93rd District

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## Protecting Homeschool Freedom

One of the biggest wins of the spring Session was the push that House Republicans and tens of thousands of families across the state made to protect Homeschool Freedom. Democrats tried to advance legislation through the House, but in the end, the bill failed. These families rallied at the State Capitol on several occasions during the spring to advocate for Homeschool Freedom. They wrote letters to legislators, made countless phone calls, and filed over 100,000 witness slips in opposition. Their efforts were rewarded.

The bill, HB 2827, would have created new regulations and opened the potential for more mandates, making it increasingly more difficult for homeschooling families to educate their children according to their family values. The Homeschool Act was another example of government overreach, and an overzealous attempt to create a solution to a problem that does not exist.

At a press conference this spring at the Capitol to protect homeschool freedom, I joined families, including the students who stood beside me, to highlight the benefits of their schooling experience. As the uncle of three homeschoolers, I've seen the benefits of homeschooling firsthand. Homeschooling helps create strong familial bonds, allows more flexibility for field trips that support learning, and enhances the normal school curriculum. Homeschooling is a freedom that must be protected for the thousands of families in our state.



Rep. Weaver at a press conference on Protecting Homeschool Freedom with Reps. Deering and Schweizer and homeschool families from across the state.

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## State Budget Spending Out of Control

Democrats passed another mammoth budget just before the midnight deadline this spring. The \$55.2 billion budget is \$2 billion more than last year and \$15 billion higher than it was just six years ago when Governor Pritzker took office. This is outrageous and egregious spending. The majority party is implementing new taxes and one-time budget gimmicks to the tune of a billion dollars to 'balance' the FY 26 budget. Illinois does not have a revenue problem, it has a spending problem. We have to tighten our belts, cut waste, and respect our taxpayers and their hard-earned dollars.

This year's budget process once again involved zero transparency as bills and amendments were introduced in the final moments of Session with no time for actual debate or input. Outrageously, the budget contains hundreds of millions of dollars in pork projects for Democrat districts. Our financial priorities are out of whack. Policies such as zero-based budgeting must be implemented for state agencies to help get our financial house in order. This year's budget assures that Democrats will need to raise taxes once again next year to cover for their out-of-control spending and unsustainable expansion of programs. Our taxpayers deserve a better and more transparent process that prioritizes economic growth and lower taxes.



## Repairs Coming to Bishop Hill

I was delighted to hear the news this spring from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) that funding has been secured for the first phase of the long-awaited restoration of the Bishop Hill State Historic Site in Henry County, a site owned by the IDNR. A total of \$12 million has been appropriated for this phase of the renovations and will include architect and engineering fees, as well as physical construction costs. The focus of the work will center on the Colony Church, Bjorklund Hotel, Boys Dormitory, church restrooms, and shed.

Previously, the Capital Development Board announced that JLK Architects had been selected to complete an Architecture Plan to restore several buildings at the Bishop Hill site. The Bishop Hill State Historic Site is a small village that includes a beautiful array of historic buildings, memorials, a park, and a gazebo. The settlement dates back to 1846 when the community was founded by Swedish immigrants fleeing religious persecution. I could not be prouder of and grateful for the community advocates who petitioned folks like Senator Neil Anderson, IDNR Director Natalie Phelps Finnie, and myself to make sure this project was advancing. These grassroots community advocates are owed a debt of gratitude by our state and community members.

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## Bad Policies Lead to Energy Crisis

Illinois is on the brink of an energy crisis driven by bad policies from the Pritzker administration. We have dropped from 27th to 36th in energy affordability during Gov. Pritzker's tenure. Illinois families and businesses are set to feel the brunt of electric rate increases going forward. The most recent data from Ameren is not good, to say the least. Costs of renewable energy sources continue to skyrocket, yet Gov. Pritzker and Democrats continue to push an agenda that is unsustainable. We must tap into our traditional energy sources, including coal and nuclear, to keep up with the rising surge of energy needs. Under the Pritzker administration, Illinois continues to shut down power plants across the state. Irresponsible planning and policies have caused this crisis. Green energy can supplement the grid, but it can't be the lead generator. It's time to get serious and put the state's energy grid back on track. Bad policy brought us here, but good policy can help us turn the corner.

## Protecting Women in Sports

This spring, I spoke on the House Floor to recognize three girls who deserved to win their races in a seventh-grade track meet but were beaten by a biological boy. They trained all year, grew as athletes and people, and accomplished times they can be proud of. These young runners deserve better from their state and its governing bodies.

We must protect our girls and women in sports and activities to ensure a level playing field for all. Federal policies prohibit biological men from competing against biological women in sports. Policies in Illinois must be aligned to protect our female athletes on the court and in the field. This is about fairness, not politics. House Republicans demanded that the IHSA and IESA respond on behalf of concerned parents and students across our state. Their response failed to defend girls' sports and neglected to address the issue. We will continue to fight for the rights of our girls and women athletes.

## Moving Legislation Forward

I passed four bills out of both chambers this spring, and they accomplish these objectives:

- **HB 2359** creates special registration plates and rules for an EMS Chief so he or she can attend to an emergency more quickly.
- **HB 2362** honors Air Medal recipients by allowing the SOS to issue special plates for those veterans.
- **HB 2366** helps simplify filing documents with the EPA, allowing electronic submissions.
- **HB 3740** allows a land transfer in my district that settles a property surveying issue.



Reps. Elik and Weaver on the House Floor.