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Thursday, May 21, 2020

Senate President Don Harmon
Senate Minority Leader Bill Brady
House Speaker Michael Madigan
House Minority Leader Jim Durkin Members of the General Assembly

From: Bob Gallo, State Director, AARP Illinois

Re: Senate Bill 1863, House Amendment 5 - Vote By Mail - November 2020 election
Dear Illinois lawmakers:

As the spring legislative session winds down during these unprecedented times, AARP Illinois encourages you to consider the next steps to address the various facets of the coronavirus pandemic not the least of which is the upcoming election. With that in mind, AARP Illinois' 1.7 million members urge you to continue to be especially mindful of older adults, who are most at risk from this disease.

The pandemic has raised concerns about keeping this year's voting process healthy and safe. With voters set to go to the polls on November 3, Illinois lawmakers should take action now to ensure all registered voters can cast their ballots safely.

AARP Illinois ultimately would like to see the legislature take steps to send an absentee ballot to all registered voters in the state while still keeping existing methods of voting in place such as 40 full days of early voting and Election Day voting at all current polling places.

As much as we would appreciate and have advocated for this approach, we do understand the budgetary and other constraints that limit its' possibility during these difficult times. To that end, AARP believes passing SB 1863 SA #5 – while also keeping the existing methods of voting in place, including 40 day early voting and election day voting at current polling places – will balance the needs of democracy with the safety and health of the dedicated constituents who cast their votes in our state.

SB 1863 SA #5 would protect older adults as they exercise their voting rights by:

- Easing the process for voters to vote by mail if they so choose

AARP
Real Possibilities

- Automatically mailing or emailing an application to any voter who applied for a vote by mail ballot during primary or general elections held over the last 3 years (2018-2020).
- Requiring election authorities to reach out to educate Illinoisans how to vote by mail and why it is important
- Keeping all existing methods of voting in place, including 40 day early voting and election day voting at all current polling places.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this issue of great importance to our state's voters. If you have questions, please contact Ryan Gruenenfelder, Director of Advocacy and Outreach, at (217) 899-7936 or by email at rgruenenfelder@arp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Gallo', written in a cursive style.

Bob Gallo
State Director, AARP Illinois