

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

JB Pritzker, Governor
James L. Bennett, Director

Gov. Pritzker Preserves and Strengthens Civil Rights Protections Under the Illinois Human Rights Act

SB 3777 protects Illinoisians from policies and practices that create unlawful discriminatory barriers, codifying a cornerstone theory of civil rights law

CHICAGO— Today, Governor JB Pritzker signed into law SB 3777, the Civil Rights Safeguard Act. At a time when federal policy changes have raised questions about civil right protections, this foundational legislation ensures that policies and practices that may appear neutral on their face, but result in unlawful discriminatory effects, can continue to be addressed under Illinois law in areas including employment, financial credit, and public accommodations.

"Illinois has a proud tradition as a leader in defending civil and human rights and ensuring that all residents enjoy equal protection under the law," said Governor JB Pritzker. "SB 3777 carries that work forward by strengthening protections against discriminatory barriers and reaffirming Illinois' commitment to fairness, opportunity, and dignity for all."

Upon enactment, the legislation will further strengthen Illinois' role as a national leader in protecting civil rights and expanding access to opportunity. Previously, Illinois codified Public Act [103-859](#), protecting disparate impact in housing under Article 3 of the Illinois Human Rights Act.

A few examples of who this bill preserves protections for:

- Survivors of domestic and sexual violence who are disproportionately female
- Black and Brown homeowners and consumers who face barriers from redlining
- Immigrants and naturalized citizens who face barriers to language access
- Disabled veterans who face housing voucher-based discrimination
- LGBTQ+ persons who face sex discrimination
- Students with disabilities who face inequitable school policies

"Illinois has long recognized that discrimination is not always intentional," **said IDHR Director James Bennett.** "Senate Bill 3777 helps preserve an important civil rights framework that allows us to identify and address barriers to opportunity when they disproportionately harm protected communities. This legislation provides clarity, consistency, and continued protections for Illinois residents while advancing our shared commitment to fairness and equal opportunity."

The bill was sponsored by State Senator Adriane Johnson (D-Buffalo Grove) and State Representative Justin Slaughter (D-Orland Park), and advanced with support from civil rights advocates, community organizations, and stakeholders across Illinois. This legislation will help ensure Illinois maintains strong and enforceable civil rights protections regardless of changes in federal enforcement priorities while providing greater certainty for employers, businesses, financial institutions, and the public.

Illinois has long been a leader in protecting civil rights and ensuring that those protections remain strong, clear and enforceable," **said State Senator Adriane Johnson (D-Buffalo Grove)**. "Senate Bill 3777, the Civil Rights Safeguard Act, ensures that disparate impact discrimination protections, a key legal theory under the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, will remain the law in Illinois, even as federal agencies are deprioritizing and rolling back disparate impact enforcement nationwide. Today, we codify disparate impact standards into the Illinois Human Rights Act for employment, financial services, and public accommodations to address systemic inequities, and to build on our legacy of protecting all Illinoisans."

"Civil rights protections must keep pace with the ways discrimination occurs in the real world," **said State Representative Justin Slaughter (D-Orland Park)**. "Equal opportunity depends on more than treating everyone the same on paper. It requires ensuring that our laws can address barriers that unfairly limit opportunity in practice. By codifying these longstanding protections into the Illinois Human Rights Act, we are reaffirming that fairness, accountability, and equal opportunity remain enduring values in Illinois."

"As the federal government dismantles the systems designed to enforce our civil rights, Illinois chooses to lead," **said Linda Xóchitl Tortolero, President and CEO of the Latino Policy Forum**. "Disparate impact protections have long been an essential component of our nation's civil rights framework that enable us to rectify policies that create unequal outcomes. From housing to school classrooms, Illinois is taking decisive action to enshrine these protections and helping to preserve meaningful access for all Illinoisans."

"The Trump Administration might dismiss decades of law and legal precedent regarding civil rights and claim that disparate impact discrimination doesn't exist, but consumers don't have that same luxury," **said Jane Doyle, Senior Regulatory Policy Associate at Woodstock Institute**. "Woodstock Institute's research shows that inequities and disparities persist in Illinoisans' access to banking, lending, and other financial services. The Civil Rights Safeguards Act protects Illinois communities by preserving key civil rights enforcement tools and enshrines the principle that Illinois consumers deserve fair access to the financial system."

"The discrimination faced by women, People of Color, and other underrepresented groups is often covert, rather than explicit," **said Cherita Ellens, Women Employed President and CEO**. "For decades, Women Employed has had a front-row view to how the disparate impact standard has been one of the most critical tools in rooting out this structural sexism and racism. This critical tool is now at risk as the federal administration unravels key civil rights protections – but we are pleased Illinois is stepping up and safeguarding our state's residents. We are grateful for the leadership of IDHR, Senator Johnson, and Representative Slaughter, and we are proud to advocate alongside them to pass SB 3777."

"NELA-Illinois is proud to stand with the Department of Human Rights and its coalition partners to ensure the rights of Illinois residents will not rise and fall with the political winds in Washington," **said Gail Eisenberg, NELA-Illinois President.** "The Civil Rights Safeguard Act is exactly what its name promises — a safeguard against a federal government that has made clear it will no longer reliably enforce the nation's anti-discrimination laws."

The law goes into effect on June 1, 2027.

For more information regarding legislative updates visit idhr.illinois.gov/legislative/updates.

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About the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR)

The Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) enforces the [Illinois Human Rights Act](#), which prohibits discrimination in connection with employment opportunities, housing and real estate transactions, access to financial credit, and the availability of public services and public accommodations, including educational institutions. Any Illinoisan who believes they have been a victim of discrimination can file a charge with IDHR within 2 years of the date of the incident (effective Jan. 1, 2025) or within one year of a housing violation. To file a charge with IDHR, call (877) 236-7703 or 7-1-1 for *TTY users or visit dhr.illinois.gov/filing-a-charge. To learn more, follow IDHR on [Facebook](#), [X/Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Bluesky](#), and [LinkedIn](#).