

102nd General Assembly

Office of the Senate President

The Senate President is the presiding officer of the Illinois Senate, elected by the 59 members of the Senate to serve a two-year term. The Illinois Constitution, statutes and rules define the functions and responsibilities of the office.

The President appoints Senate members to standing committees and to permanent and interim study commissions, designating one member as chair. The President also appoints the Majority Leader and Assistant Majority Leaders, who serve as officers of the Senate.

With the Speaker of the House, the Senate President shares primary responsibility for legislative procedures and operations. By strategically directing the flow of legislation, the President ultimately sets the pace of work in the Senate. The President is required to approve all vouchers for the expenditure of funds appropriated for use by the Senate and to certify that all bills passed by the Senate are in accordance with Senate rules.

As chair of the Senate Operations Commission, the President oversees a seven-member management committee responsible for deciding Senate policy, hiring Senate employees, purchasing supplies, renting equipment, and maintaining the Senate chambers and office, among other duties.

In addition to presiding over the Senate, the President is the leader of the majority party in the Legislature's upper chamber. Likewise, the Senate Minority Leader, selected by the minority party and formally elected by all Senate members, speaks on behalf of the minority party. Responsibilities of the Senate Minority Leader include appointing members to serve on certain boards, commissions and standing committees, and selecting assistant leaders and staff.



Don Harmon
Senate President

Don Harmon (Democrat) built a reputation over nearly two decades in the Illinois State Senate as both a champion of Democratic values and an individual who is willing to work across the aisle to fight for hardworking Illinoisans.

Harmon, an Oak Park native, was first elected to the Illinois Senate in the fall of 2002. During his time in the General Assembly, he supported early childhood education, ethics reform, curbing gun violence, protecting civil rights and expanding voter access.

He also worked to protect Illinois' natural resources, promote renewable energy and enhance economic opportunity for all.

In January 2020, Harmon was elected by his colleagues to serve as the 39th President of the Illinois Senate, vowing to lead a new era of ethical progress as the Senate works to rebuild trust in public service and rationalize state tax policy.

Harmon was almost immediately tasked with leading the Senate through the challenges of COVID-19. He swiftly took steps to keep members, staff and their families safe. He oversaw rule changes to ensure the Senate could convene remotely, allowing vital business to continue.

Harmon has an undergraduate degree from Knox College in Galesburg, Ill., and a law degree and an MBA from the University of Chicago. He was a founding member of the Boat Drink Caucus band, a bipartisan group of lawmakers who set aside politics to perform and entertain at small venues across the state.

He and his wife, Teresa, have three children — Don, Frances and Margaret.

Kimberly A. Lightford (Democrat) began serving as the first Black woman Senate Majority Leader in January 2019. She was sworn in as a Senator representing the 4th Legislative District in November 1998. In 2009, she was appointed Assistant Majority Leader.



Kimberly A. Lightford
Senate Majority Leader

Lightford is known as an education expert, starting the state’s universal preschool program, putting the best teachers in classrooms, and reforming disciplinary practices that were disproportionately affecting at-risk and minority students. She is responsible for raising the minimum wage in Illinois three times, including gradually increasing it to \$15 per hour. As the youngest Black woman elected to the Senate, she led legislation that established the Equal Pay Act. When serving as chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, she led the General Assembly in passing a four-pillar agenda to rid Illinois of systemic racism.

A lifelong resident of her district, Lightford was born in Chicago and raised in Maywood. Lightford holds a bachelor’s in public communications from Western Illinois University and a master’s of public administration from the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Lightford is committed to community pride. She offers free programs in her district, including supplemental services in reading, math and writing for middle school students. Each year, she honors grandparents raising grandchildren in a special ceremony and hosts a back-to-school event that provides school supplies and a fun day to hundreds of children at Brookfield Zoo. She also sponsors events to help inform men about prostate cancer and women about breast cancer.



Dan McConchie
Senate Republican Leader

Dan McConchie (Republican) was elected to serve as the Illinois Senate Republican Leader in January 2021 and has served as state Senator for the 26th District since 2016.

Prior to his election as leader, McConchie served as a caucus budget negotiator, advocating for responsible state spending and lower taxes. He currently serves on the Senate Executive Committee and Redistricting Committee.

Throughout his tenure as a legislator, he has supported policies and legislation that promote job growth, smaller and smarter government, and ethics reforms to root out corruption. He was instrumental in negotiating an overhaul to the state’s school funding system to ensure more equity and state support was allocated to Illinois’ neediest schools. He is a member of the Move Over Task Force that proposes ways to improve and protect law enforcement, other emergency responders and motorists who are stopped on the side of Illinois roads.

McConchie served nine years in the Army National Guard. He spent 20 years working in public affairs for national advocacy groups and two years as an adjunct professor at Trinity International University. He is currently an energy consultant with Verde Solutions.

He has a B.A. in biblical studies from Central Bible College and an M.A. in Christian thought with an emphasis in bioethics from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

McConchie and his wife, Milena, reside in Hawthorn Woods and have two adult daughters.