2022 Illinois Gubernatorial Guide

The Network Advocating Against Domestic Violence is a collaborative membership organization with 40+ members who are committed to preventing, intervening in, and eliminating gender-based violence (GBV) through education, public policy, and advocacy. We believe that the gubernatorial candidates’ stances on gender-based violence, reproductive rights, criminal justice reform, and gun-violence legislation all impact the lives of survivors and the organizations that serve them. The information below has been collected from the candidates' websites, interviews, press releases, and media coverage. These materials were summarized for brevity and clarity.

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Gun-Violence Legislation

Gun violence and gender-based violence are often intertwined. According to Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data, every month, an average of 57 women are killed with a firearm by an intimate partner in the United States [1]. In addition, The Network’s annual data report identified that, according to the Chicago Police Department, 63% of domestic violence homicides were homicides by firearm in Chicago in 2021 [2].

Firearms are used as a tool of power and control to instill fear and inflict abuse on survivors. Gun violence legislation greatly impacts survivors of GBV.

Reproductive Rights

The consequences of violence on survivor’s reproductive and sexual health are extensive and include reproductive coercion. Reproductive coercion is a form of gender-based violence rooted in an attempt to exert power and control over a partner through controlling their reproductive choices and healthcare access [1]. Reproductive coercion may include: making threats to affect a partner’s reproductive choices, forcing someone to carry a pregnancy to term, interfering with birth control, or forcing someone to terminate a pregnancy. Legislation around reproductive rights may affect the prevalence of reproductive coercion.

Criminal Justice Reform

In January of 2021, the Illinois Safety, Accountability, Fairness and Equity-Today (SAFE-T) Act was passed, implementing sweeping reform impacting many aspects of the criminal justice system, including pre-arrest diversion, policing, pretrial detention, sentencing, and corrections [1]. The broad-reaching measure abolishes cash bail beginning in January 2023; reforms police training, certification and use-of-force standards; expands detainee rights; and requires body cameras at all departments by 2025 [2].

The Pretrial Fairness Act (PFA) was passed and signed into law under the larger SAFE-T act. This historic legislation includes sweeping criminal justice system reform that also includes increased protections for survivors of gender-based violence during the pretrial process. The Pretrial Fairness Act also allows for greater inclusion of survivors in the pretrial process in the initial hearing and subsequent release hearings [3].

Candidate Darren Bailey proudly represents rural Illinoisans; he operates a family-owned farm in Louisville, Illinois. Bailey currently represents the 55th district in the Illinois State Senate and with his lifelong background in the farming industry, and is the Republican on the Senate Agriculture Committee. His main issues include re-opening the economy and schools, government transparency, supporting the agricultural industry, and lowering taxes.

Running for his second term, Governor J.B Pritzker was sworn in as the 43rd Governor of Illinois in January 2019. Some of his top issues include improving education, access to affordable healthcare, strengthening rural communities, supporting small businesses, and promoting social justice.

Candidate Scott Schluter is a lifelong resident of Southern Illinois, currently working as a Diesel Technician. Schluter credits his passion for political activism to his time spent in the Air Force, of which he is a veteran of six years. Currently, he serves as the Chair of the Southern Illinois Libertarian Party and Sr. Vice-Commander of VFW post 1301. Schluter’s platform issues include supporting the right to bear arms, mending the Illinois pension system and improving the Illinois economy.

**Gender-Based Violence**

As of October 2022, Bailey has not released any direct stance or opinion on gender-based violence in Illinois. However, Bailey voted against the additional $50 million investment for domestic violence service providers in Illinois. Recently, Bailey has voted for and against some GBV-related legislation. Bailey has voted in favor of amending the Sexual Assault Survivors Emergency Treatment Act, amending to the Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986, and the creation of the Domestic Violence Task Force. He has voted against an amendment to the Victims’ Economic Security and Safety Act, and a bill to support K-12 student victims of GBV.

Pritzker has signed several pieces of legislation to enhance protections for GBV survivors. Examples include expanding where survivors can access treatment and for how long, and providing an additional $50 million investment for domestic violence service providers across the state. Referring to this legislation, Pritzker has said, “Every difficult choice and obstacle we eliminate for victims of domestic violence unlocks an opportunity for them to prioritize their safety”.

As of October 2022, Schluter has not made public comment on the topic of gender-based violence. He does not have a voting record to compare with other candidates.
Gun-Violence Legislation

Bailey is a strong supporter of the Second Amendment and an advocate for the constitutional right to bear arms. Bailey also supports comprehensive firearm education for gun owners. Additionally, Bailey has voted against various gun control measures in the past.

Pritzker has made effort to enact gun control in Illinois. He has openly shared his opinion on the federal gun control package, stating that it is a good start but is not sufficient. Pritzker has noted that the gun control measures Congress is considering are less restrictive than laws already on the books in Illinois.

Schluter supports protecting the right to bear arms, and is standing for an end to both the FOID Act and the Concealed Carry Act. If elected, he claims he will, “veto any gun regulation legislation that comes across my desk.” Additionally, Schluter “will use every bit of influence and power available to me to push lawmakers to pass a 'Constitutional Carry' law, requiring no licensing of any kind to own or carry a firearm.”

Reproductive Rights

Previously, Bailey called for a total ban on abortion. In recent months, Bailey has publicly softened his stance by stating that he would support an exception to a total abortion ban when the mother’s life is at risk. His position includes banning abortion, even in cases of rape and incest.

In response to the overturning of Roe V. Wade, Pritzker has stated, “In Illinois, we are a state committed to expanding access to reproductive health care including abortion care, contraception access, fertility treatment, and gender-affirming care. We’ve made it clear that we trust people to make the best decisions for themselves about their own reproductive health.”

Schluter has not made public comment on the topic of reproductive rights.

Criminal Justice Reform

Bailey has said he supports repealing a package of criminal justice reforms enacted in July of 2021, referring to the SAFE-T Act. In regards to the SAFE-T Act, if elected, Bailey has claimed he would repeal this act. Bailey has voiced his criticisms of the act stating that, “The SAFE-T Act was concocted at 4 a.m. in the wee hours of the morning without any police involvement at all. We need to come and sit at the table and deal with the real problems”.

In 2021, the SAFE-T Act was signed into law by Governor Pritzker. In response to a survey by the Illinois Justice Project, he stated, “I believe that we can keep Illinoisans safe and make improvements to our justice system at the same time, which is why I enacted the SAFE-T Act.” In addition to this act, Pritzker has signed multiple pieces of legislation that address criminal justice reform in July of 2021, on which he stated “Together, this package of initiatives moves us closer to a holistic criminal justice system, one that builds confidence and trust in a system that has done harm to too many people for too long.”

Criminal justice reform is a large platform issue for Schluter. He highlights his stance on the decriminalization of all drugs and focusing of resources for addiction treatment, as well as his opposition to minimum mandatory sentencing. In regards to the recent legislation, Schluter has stated, "The SAFE-T Act has good and not so good aspects. First off, I’m in favor of ending cash bail for certain offenses, as it is essentially a tax on the poor. Holding people who can’t afford bail for non-violent offenses prevents them from providing for their families [...] It is yet to be seen if it will help or hinder efforts to curb crime, but we shall see."