

"I hope you will travel along with me in this little book, all the way to the last chapter. It should not take you very long. You will find out many things not reported in the news media, which I hope will help you make an informed decision for your future—for you, your family, your neighbors, and your fellow citizens of Illinois." —Dennis Byrne

## THE GOVERNOR YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT EVERY ILLINOISAN SHOULD KNOW

Dennis Byrne, former long-time moderate Democrat columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times* here shares his concerns with you. He explains our governor's shift away from the traditional Democratic Party's role of representing working-class and middle-income Americans.

He explains what the major changes in Illinois's laws brought about by Pritzker and his "new" Democrats will mean to moderate Democrat and Independent voters who may have voted for the governor four years ago . . . and what lies ahead for us who live in Illinois if he wins again.

Byrne's little book is a compelling report you will want to read and share with family members, friends, and neighbors before casting your vote in our upcoming statewide election.

PAID FOR by People Who Play by the Rules PAC.

THE GOVERNOR YOU DO NOT KNOW: WHAT EVERY ILLINOISAN SHOULD KNOW

DENNIS BYRNE

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by DENNIS BYRNE  
Former Opinion Columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times*



# **The Governor You Do Not Know**

What Every Illinoisan Should Know

By Dennis Byrne

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# Contents

1. Liberals and Moderates No Longer Welcome?.....	1
2. Crime Will Get <i>Even Worse</i> in Illinois in 2023 – Thanks to Governor Pritzker .....	8
3. Pritzker’s COVID-19 War on Your Schoolchildren <i>and</i> What’s Coming Next.....	15
4. Pritzker Is Your <i>Real</i> Boss? .....	23
5. Our Wreck-the-Economy, <i>Not</i> -Stopping- COVID Governor .....	28
6. School Choice for J. B., but Not for Thee.....	34
7. Character Is Supposed to Count.....	43
8. Your Taxes Will Make Illinois America’s Abortion Capital.....	48
9. So, What Does J. B. Pritzker Have in Mind, for You and Your Family, If He Is Re-elected? .....	54
<i>About the Author</i> .....	59



# 1

## Liberals and Moderates No Longer Welcome?

I can't remember exactly when I was no longer a committed and loyal Democrat. It started to happen, gradually, back when I wrote for the *Chicago Sun-Times*. As a member of the paper's editorial board, I had to argue and defend opinions and values that were basic to most Americans way back then. But the cracks had started to form.

I voted for every Democratic presidential candidate from Lyndon B. Johnson to Michael Dukakis. I didn't vote for former Democrat-turned-Republican Ronald Reagan. I wrote columns attacking Reagan for his budget-busting borrowing that helped finance his military build-up—a policy, along with a few others, that I only realized later would end the former “Cold War” with the old Soviet Union without a shot fired, nor any Americans getting killed in yet-another war.

I reread John F. Kennedy's eloquent speeches. Took them all to heart.

Equality. Compassion. Respect. Tolerance. Camelot. All were defining legs of the Democratic

Party. As a graduate student, I watched Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream Speech" live on television and was transported by his "Free at last . . ." finale.

But change was coming. King's views are now forbidden among today's New Democrat political candidates and their media publicists. For example, his pleading that we judge people by the quality of their character and not the color of their skin is not allowed.

President John Kennedy's 1960s realistic approach to domestic policy — recall that *he cut taxes* to spur the economy, *the exact reverse* of what the Biden Democrats in Washington (including all Democrats from Illinois) did just this past August; *they voted for increases in income taxes* for everyone who makes more than about \$25,000 a year — has now been rejected by the Democratic Party. Why?

Because the ideology of "democratic socialism" has become the Democratic Party's line. Woe to any Democrat who does not follow this line, as those who live in the Chicago suburbs have seen with their members of Congress. Witness the recent primary defeat of long-time moderate liberal Democrat Dan Lipinski. Real liberals and moderates don't exist in Illinois Democrat politics any more.

Former pro-life Democrat U.S. Senator Richard Durbin, like so many politicians who went to Washington to "drain the swamp" of corruption there,

found out instead that our national government in Washington is a hot tub.

Our other Illinois U.S. Senator, Tammy Duckworth — who is up for re-election this November — is a military veteran who deserves our thanks for her service and the sacrifice she made. But she actually voted for the Biden Democrat legislation 95 percent of the time — the spending and tax increases, all the extremist social policies, and all the green energy legislation that primarily benefits the Democratic Party's largest donors, not us.

Never in my former Democrat lifetime could I have imagined national and Illinois politics being so corrupted by this failed far-left ideology. But now it's all here.

Both sides of the political aisle are always guilty of political sins, but not equally now, I'm afraid. From the far left has blossomed contempt of freedom of discussion and beliefs. Democrats now use *force* instead of persuasion to achieve their big government agenda.

Parents are directed to bow to expert educational dictates, even when those dictates are hurting their children. Pluralism, once a liberal cornerstone, has become a dirty word. America no longer is a melting pot; it's a geopolitical aggregation of dueling clans.

This calls to mind a classic funny line from comedian Mel Brooks. In a comedy sketch, Carl Reiner asks Brooks, playing a two-thousand-year-old man,

if his clan had a national anthem. “Certainly,” Brooks replied. “You don’t forget a national anthem: It is ‘Let ’em all go to hell except for Cave 76!’”

The American Civil Liberties Union, formerly America’s premier champion of free speech, once even bravely fought in the courts to protect the free speech and assembly rights of Nazis to march in Skokie, Illinois (the home of many Holocaust survivors). No more. The ACLU now is a handmaid of the extremists, fighting, for example, against the free exercise of religion by making the Catholic nuns of the Little Sisters of the Poor violate their religious beliefs when it came to abortion.

Once liberals fought for free expression; now they support the blacklisting of opposing views on social media. Liberals once understood the important role that traditional culture played in strengthening society. Now anyone who worries about the decline of the family as the foundation of a just and civil society is ridiculed or condemned as homophobic. Conformity to radical dogma – whether it is exposing kindergarten kids to controversial doctrines about gender and sex, or teaching that a white child is inherently racist – is prescribed as absolutely necessary, no discussion allowed.

Leftist attacks on some of our historic liberal and moderate American values are breaking out all over America. One hotspot in particular is the one-party Democratic state of Illinois.



Democratic Governor J. B. Pritzker has exercised a level of authoritarian control that has damaged, as never before, the lives of parents and their children by closing classrooms throughout the state, unlike in other states, depriving Illinois schoolchildren of more than a year of classroom learning that will cripple many of them for life.

Thanks to Pritzker's far-reaching pandemic lockdown orders, small businesses across the state also were shut down, and more than a hundred thousand workers lost their jobs. This from a political party that has long insisted that it was the voice of middle-class working Americans.

Democrats regularly claim they're the only political party fighting well-funded special interests from taking over elections and dictating policy that defies the public interest. No longer. Government worker unions are huge campaign donors to Pritzker and Illinois Democrats. Consequently, the government unions practically run the state, standing in the way of badly needed public school and pension reform — never mind the crushing, almost \$300 billion in pension debt that is hurling Illinois towards an economic disaster.

In Republican-controlled states, reform-minded Democrats fought to end gerrymandered redistricting that handed the incumbent candidates unfair election advantages. Not in Illinois. Pritzker promised to end super-partisan redistricting that favored Democrats.

He didn't. Instead, he signed a same-old, same-old political map that continued the abuses that have been the hallmark of Democratic Illinois politicians for decades.

To pay for the Pritzker Democrats' reckless spending binge, proposals for more tax increases are on the agenda for *next* year, just like the 30 cents a gallon gasoline and diesel fuel tax increases, which (after the 2019 tax increase) are now scheduled to automatically increase every year by an additional 3 cents a gallon. Pritzker announced that he stopped that increase this year, but he only delayed it until next year — after, he assumes, he will have been re-elected.

Before Governor Pritzker's gasoline/diesel tax increase in 2019, Illinois drivers paid the twenty-first-highest fuel taxes. Illinois residents now pay the second-highest fuel tax in the USA, at 78 cents a gallon. Only California pays more.

There's more. Much more. More reasons for political moderates and independent-minded Democrats to rise up and say, "Enough." Yes, I know that it's difficult to cut the cord to the political party you grew up with, even just one time for an opposing candidate you may not entirely agree with on every issue. But, what have you got to lose, when — as you will learn in the next pages — you see what's coming from four more years of Pritzker rule of Illinois?

I took a lot of thumping from my readers when the betrayal of my old Democrat Party values finally prompted me to vote for “the other guy.”

In this book I write about Pritzker and Illinois because it is my home state, a place that I care about. I was born, raised, educated, and employed there for almost my entire life, except for college and a stint in the U.S. Navy. Yes, I’ve moved to Florida where my wife’s family lives and where freedom and commonsense are the rule *and* the law. That still doesn’t diminish my caring for, or interest in, my old home state.

So, where did Pritzker and Illinois Democrats go wrong? In these pages, you will see my effort, perhaps not always persuasive to you, to explain why I didn’t leave the Democratic Party, but rather, why the Democratic Party left me. I hope you will travel along with me in this little book, all the way to the last chapter. It should not take you very long.

You will find out many things not reported in the news media, which I hope will help you make an informed decision for your future—for you, your family, your neighbors, and your fellow citizens of Illinois.

Thank you for taking a look at what one former liberal Democrat has to say.

## 2

# **Crime Will Get *Even Worse* in Illinois in 2023 – Thanks to Governor Pritzker**

How does a murderer sentenced to up to 199 years in prison manage to get paroled instead of serving life?

That's how it goes with Illinois's "enlightened" criminal justice system. Feel bad for the criminals; forget about the victims. This philosophy seems to have permeated much of the Democratic Party and is now proudly supported by Pritzker.

The victims in this story were two cops who were doing good in one of Chicago's most dangerous high-rise public housing projects: Cabrini-Green on the Near North Side where gentrification has wiped out not just the buildings but also troubling memories.

Sgt. James Severin and Patrol Officer Anthony Rizzato. Remember their names. They were volunteers in a new "walk-and-talk" program designed to strengthen trust between residents and police. Get out of the patrol cars; walk around the neighborhood; get to know everyone; climb the urine-soaked stairs inside the buildings. Sgt. Severin had played softball

with the kids and used his own money to set up an ice cream fund.

One summer evening in 1970, when the two were walking across a field, a sniper in one of the buildings had them in his high-powered rifle's sight. Both were shot in their backs. They were pronounced DOA at Henrotin Hospital. The city was in an uproar; the Rev. Jesse Jackson called Severin a "beautiful man" at the wake.

Two men were arrested and convicted of the murders: George C. Knight, then twenty-three, and Johnnie Veal, eighteen. Each was sentenced to 100 to 199 years, for which they would serve for life. Except . . .

In 2021, Veal, age sixty-eight, was paroled and released by today's "enlightened" Illinois Prisoner Review Board by an 8-4 vote, which pleases today's new Democrats. Those are the ones who think their "progressive" rules are there to correct past "racist" criminal justice errors like, say, lifetime sentences.

If there ever was a truly bipartisan issue over which all in Illinois can unite, it's crime. Everyone is against it and crime victims are not selected by their politics. No punk asks the old lady whether she's a Democrat or Republican before he mugs her. There are no Republican or Democrat wings in our prisons.

Yet, crime and its prevention have turned into one of the hottest partisan fights of our time. And it has



a lot to do with why I'm not a "new" Democrat of today's flavor when it comes to law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

Take J. B. Pritzker. Illinois is literally aflame with crime: gang turf wars and revenge killings; thieving mobs breaking into high-end Michigan Avenue stores, driving businesses to leave or shut down. Police are routinely despised, if not attacked and shot. We now have punitive laws that cripple true law enforcement. "Defund the Police" has been the cry.

So, where is Governor Pritzker? Out running for president somewhere? Instead he should be finding out firsthand how the other 99 percent live.

Democrats like to speak of "root causes," but they always avoid this one: so many of the shootings are the result of men who have no fathers in their lives. That's because the idea of fatherhood and family have been stripped away by the ideology that dominates today's new Democrats. Yet, multiple studies demonstrate that a father present at home is a key to children avoiding the mire of hopelessness and gang violence. Gangs have now replaced fathers in Illinois.

Pritzker's proud contribution is his signing the so-called "Safety, Accountability, Fairness, and Equity-Today Act," (ACT-T). Its provisions are debatable—some commendable, at least one absolutely condemnable. But there wasn't much time for debate. The seven-hundred-page bill was rammed through

on January 13, 2021, literally in the dead of night with very little debate.

Law enforcement officials were not listened to. Pritzker signed it with gusto, proclaiming anyone who opposed it didn't believe in justice or was controlled by fearmongers. Rep. Justin Slaughter, a Chicago Democrat, jumped aboard saying that Republicans who opposed the law had a "bad stench of racism."

Okay, let's get past the name-calling and look at the law's worst and most controversial provision: the abolition of cash bail. We've already heard and seen the horrible, deadly results of such a policy in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Criminals were returned to the street to steal and kill again. So, last August, San Diego and Los Angeles *stopped* "no bail" for many arrests, a message which has not made it to Pritzker's policy of full-speed-out-of-jail for Illinois criminals.

Look for the same to happen in Illinois when ACT-T takes effect in 2023 — conveniently scheduled for *after* Pritzker runs for re-election this year. Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx didn't wait for the law to go into effect before instituting her own version. No more cash bail in Cook County is now the rule. I've always hated the cliché "soft on crime," but it's hard to find another phrase for Foxx's disregard for victim safety.

There are other new-Democrat aspects to this mess. Recently four men opened fire on each other,

one of them a security guard who tried to intervene. The four were injured and charges were expected to be forthcoming.

But no. Foxx's prosecutors refused to file any charges against two of the men. No explanation. Not even aggravated discharge of a weapon.

It's a plague. Remember this number: 74. That's the number of people who in 2021 were awaiting their trials, some for felonies, but who were out of prison and charged with committing *additional* crimes in Chicago. What crimes? Killing or shooting someone. Or trying to kill or shoot someone. The number of victims was more: 111. Should anyone be surprised there was this much bloodshed when people who are charged with violent crimes like second-degree murder, arson, and kidnapping are automatically released without bail from custody while awaiting trial?

The no-cash-bail set-up is so wrong that even some Democrats have stepped forward to oppose it. One is James Glasgow, the Will County state's attorney, who warned that it will virtually handcuff police. "I have 640 people in the Will County Jail," he said. "All their bonds will be extinguished on January 1, and sixty are charged with murder."

Foxx's "go easy" approach struck even closer to home: in her own office. Disgruntled assistant state's attorneys are quitting, including longtime prosecutor James Murphy. In his resignation he said, "I can no

longer work for this administration. I have zero confidence in their leadership. This administration is more concerned with political narratives and agendas than with victims and prosecuting violent crime. That is why I can't stay any longer."

Maybe that's another reason that so many Chicagoans and Illinoisans can't stay any longer in their state.

P.S. Here's a history lesson about gun crime you have probably never heard. It's probably the best way to end the soaring murder rate in Chicago once and for all. It worked before in another major city.

During the 1990s in Richmond, Virginia, the city's murder rate was the third worst in the United States. Local law enforcement was desperate for a solution. They found one: a little-known federal law which said that any felon who committed a crime *with a firearm* had to serve a long mandatory prison sentence in the federal prison system.

The city's officials made an arrangement with the U.S. Attorney for Northern Virginia to take over the prosecution and imprisonment of such qualifying criminals, all at almost no cost to the city. Guess what happened?

Violent crime and murders dropped by close to 30 percent in the first year of enforcement. The program was called "Project Exile." Various organizations in

Virginia, including the National Rifle Association, began to publicize the new program.

Billboards went up on the borders of Virginia that advertised Project Exile with words like, “Do the crime with a gun in Virginia and you’ll do the time.” The Richmond murder rate continued to fall, down to about *half* its former rate. A few other cities, like Buffalo, New York, also started the program.

But what happened next was the usual response of the new Democrats: Eric Holder, President Obama’s attorney general, killed Project Exile.

If Governor Pritzker and the Chicago Democrats want to end the gang bloodshed in Chicago — which has taken so many innocent lives and wounded many more — they only need to demand that President Biden’s Attorney General Merrick Garland bring Project Exile to Chicago. A Chicago mayor who made this happen would probably be elected “Mayor for Life” by grateful Chicagoans in a city safe again — elected even without any of Chicago’s usual, notorious vote fraud.

Do you think that new Democrats in Illinois will ever make that happen in Illinois? Good luck, folks. I encourage you, my readers, who have dipped into this book, to do an internet search on Project Exile.

Illinois needs citizen activists to do what your politicians refuse to do: find a way to stop the killings in our cities.



### 3

## **Pritzker's COVID-19 War on Your Schoolchildren *and* What's Coming Next**

For more than two years, claiming “emergency powers,” Pritzker locked our children out of their classrooms and kept them at home for months on end.

They stared at flickering computer screens as if they were actually learning something.

Kids had to wear masks. They couldn't see their friends. After-school clubs were banned. Extracurricular activities where children could pursue their interests or try out new skills were illegal.

Sports and team try-outs? Forget it. Proms and homecomings? Cancelled. Friday night meeting friends after the game? Not possible. Seniors wanting to display their strengths to college scouts in hopes of athletic scholarships? Sitting at home — their once-in-a-lifetime opportunity gone with the Pritzker wind.

When Pritzker deemed it safe for children to finally return to the classroom, they had to sit six feet or three feet (it's hard to tell) apart behind ridiculous plastic shields or in their own pods. Face masks on!

Some three million kids were ordered around as if their parents' wishes didn't matter. In fact, they didn't. Parents finally had to organize—to plead with or file lawsuits against their own local school boards for a return to sanity. “Sanity” meant what the U.S. Government's own data showed: school children are at close-to-zero risk of being harmed by COVID-19.

Let's look briefly at the science that Pritzker reminds us that he followed. I quote the Pew Charitable Trust: “COVID Harmed Kids' Mental Health—And Schools Are Feeling It.”

After more than 18 months of school closures and social isolation, the nation's more than 50 million public school children\* are mostly back at their desks. But two months into the fall semester, teachers and students already are saying they need a break.

The grief, anxiety and depression children have experienced during the pandemic is welling over into classrooms and hallways, resulting in crying and disruptive behavior in many younger kids and increased violence and bullying among adolescents. For many other children, who keep their sadness and fear inside, the pressures of school have become too great.

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\* <https://educationdata.org/k12-enrollment-statistics>

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, emergency department visits for suspected suicide attempts among adolescents jumped 31% in 2020\*, compared with 2019. In February and March of this year, emergency department visits for suspected suicide attempts were 51% higher among girls aged 12-17 than during the same period in 2019.\*\*

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children's Hospital Association called the damage caused by the Pritzker-like confinement "a national emergency." Significantly, they warned that youth of color have been disproportionately impacted.

Pritzker and his political party claim to be the only ones who fight for the "disproportionately impacted." Yet, when it came to the children he locked out of school, he displayed no sign that he cared about them or that he was even aware of the impact his policies had on them.

All this research was available in November 2021, yet Pritzker ignored it. Months later, he was still in court to affirm his power to mask the children. Thankfully, the Illinois Supreme Court finally slapped down his

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\* <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7024e1.htm>

\*\* <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2021/11/08/COVID-harmed-kids-mental-health-and-schools-are-feeling-it>)

mandate after a blizzard of lawsuits by Republicans, for example those of downstate Illinois Attorney General candidate Tom Devore, which ended Pritzker's mask mandate.

Let's not forget how Pritzker's mandates boxed in parents. If you are a parent of schoolchildren, the memory of how the governor disrupted your life on such a personal level will linger for years. Not in my memory has any government official so directly and negatively affected the lives of so many people.

When both parents were working or a single parent was struggling on his or her own, families were especially tested. Should you quit your job to stay at home with the kids? Or hire a caregiver you can't afford? Talk about a choice that is no choice at all.

Too many tragedies can be hung on Pritzker to list here. But here's one especially heartbreaking result of his hubris.

Experts attribute the dramatic increases in child suicide, attempted suicide, and self-harm to the pandemic's insidious restrictions, not the pandemic itself. These increases have been seen in pre-teen children as well as teens. This puts to rest Pritzker's tiresome claims that he's always "followed the science." He kept the children in chains even though science quickly confirmed that COVID posed almost no risk to healthy children.

As everyone soon found out, COVID-19 was primarily a threat to the elderly. Adults caught it, yes,

and some suffered worse symptoms, ending up in hospitals, and some died. But almost 95 percent of those who died had other serious medical issues like cancer, diabetes, heart disease, or pre-existing respiratory diseases. Very few children have any of these issues because they are generally not old enough to have them. Those that did could certainly have had accommodations made for them.

Then why did Pritzker, and like-minded Democrat governors, target *all* children to such a punishing, overwrought, and unnecessary degree that has led to years of lost learning and mental health issues? Were they just honestly mistaken? We later learned that the entire basis for continuing school lockdowns and remote learning (which was not really learning at all) was a favor to education unions, based on “research” given to the Biden administration.

*For most school personnel, apart from teachers working at home, the policy became a two-year paid vacation.*

The impact on children has been horrendous, so horrendous in fact that many mothers across the nation have revolted. They formed alliances, opened Facebook groups, organized meetings, confronted politicians. Pritzker has managed to accomplish something unique: what he’s done to millions of Illinois children has turned moderate Democrats and Independents against his Democratic Party.



That's especially remarkable for suburban women who have long been reliable Democratic voters, because that party had the reputation of being "the education party." Recent polls say that has now all changed.

Many Illinois parents were moved, for the first time in their lives, to get involved politically, as individuals and in groups. Some parents responded by setting up tutoring groups. Others transferred their children to Catholic or other religious or private schools. Others turned to home schooling and home-school cooperative organizations.

They say they've had enough, that this time, they'll vote the other way — some perhaps for the first time. This flies in the face of given wisdom that suburban women are the Democratic Party's immovable backbone.

It all sounds familiar to me.

At one point in my life I decided that I, too, had had enough. I made the difficult choice to break ranks with my own party. I decided to vote based on commonsense and not party loyalty. In some cases, I even voted for a non-Democratic candidate that I did not agree with on some issues because the Democrat on the ballot was a new Democratic Party progressive radical.

It's not just the damage done to children that has so many reconsidering their usual vote. It's also the entire

Illinois economy that Pritzker has strangled, as major employers leave Illinois, as taxes keep increasing, as violent crime threatens almost everyone now. More on all that in the chapters to come.

Now, about that promise in this chapter's title: what's "next" in Illinois public schools if the Pritzker Democrats stay in power?

Laws in effect this coming school year include *mandating* that all public schools must allow boys who identify as girls into female bathrooms and locker rooms as well as on different sex sports teams. The harm imposed on our girls' sports will be enormous. The violation of their privacy will be unforgivable.

Also, get ready for sex education classes starting in first grade that will emphasize non-traditional sexual practices to children who have not even reached the age of puberty. This is happening in Illinois, a state where reading, writing, and arithmetic scores show that *often more than half* of students do not perform at grade level.

And yet, Democrat politicians are taking time away from essential basic education to teach age-*in*appropriate sex "education." It makes no sense.

Without the strong foundation in reading and math that must happen in the early grades for our children to be eventually prepared for either college or training in a trade like nursing (math required!) or handling documents in a small business (strong reading and

writing skills required!), wasting time on early-grade sex education is a threat to our children's futures.

Pritzker's war on children is unconscionable.

Its full consequences are yet to be observed, but we have already seen drastic damage. Democrats and Independents who are honest with themselves will see this and take action.

## 4

### Pritzker Is Your *Real* Boss?

Speaking of “the children,” how has it felt that Pritzker, flinging around his dictatorial powers for more than two years, has treated *you* like a child?

Go here. Stay there. Do this. Don’t do that.

It all was so confusing. So hurtful. So insulting! As if you were too ignorant, too heartless, or too selfish to protect yourself *and* your family and your neighbors.

Let us return for a minute to those frightening opening months of 2020, when COVID-19 was infecting increasing millions of Americans and killing hundreds of thousands of the elderly.

Looking back, it has now become apparent that our government officials and scientists were also stumbling around in the dark, trying this or that, hoping that they could find the key to control the pandemic. That stumbling included scientists and politicians of all kinds.

You don’t have to take my word for it. The director of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) said last August 17, “To be frank, we are responsible for some pretty dramatic, pretty public mistakes, from testing, to data to communications.”

We willingly complied with the recommendations from Washington, out of a sense of self-preservation or as a socially responsible commitment to the public good. Police, health care providers, and other essential workers bravely reported for work. All well and good.

That is, it was all well and good until the unending lockdown mandates and other imperatives were proven to be ineffective and other states started dropping them—except in “Hey, I’m-the-governor-and-I-know-what’s-best-for-you” Illinois, California, New York, and elsewhere, all states under one-party Democrat rule.

Remember what it was like?

*You must stay in your house. You must not go to work. You must not gather with friends or family . . . or maybe we’ll eventually allow ten people to gather for Thanksgiving dinner, if I okay it. Heading to the hardware store? Sorry, it’s closed. No telling when it’ll reopen.*

For some, like restaurant servers, your job was gone. So, what does it feel like to be on the unemployment line for the first time? Humiliating?

You’ve worked hard all your life, and now it feels like you’re on the dole—not because of something you did wrong, but because the governor told you that you *must not work*.

So desperate were some restaurants to stay alive that they received a limited blessing to open, with a condition: they could only serve diners who were



willing, in the dead of winter, to eat in goofy-looking pod-like igloos.

No one escaped. Every person. Every family. Every business. Every school. Every church. Everyone. Can you think of a time when every single person, every last one, was ordered around so completely from on high in our state? I can't.

Okay, we could discuss forever how ineffective was the full-scale retreat into our shells. We since have learned that lockdowns did not actually work anywhere in the world. Even early in the pandemic you could find many conflicting studies. But if you disagreed with the studies the *government* chose to believe, it was a sure sign you were anti-science. Or worse.

The very heart of science is *questioning*. Start with a question, form a hypothesis, test it, question the results, replicate the test, then maybe you'll have some decent results. That's what real science is.

But we weren't allowed to question anything.

Let's consider the government-science take on masks. At first, Anthony Fauci advised you not to wear the mask because it would be ineffective. This, after all, had been settled science at the CDC and FDA for decades when it came to a virus, since, unlike bacteria, viruses are too small to be stopped by almost all masks.

But, next, compulsory mask-wearing became the new rule. Masks were required to be worn without

exception in offices, schools, churches, and everywhere else indoors. For some, even outside—joggers, bikers, and others.

Just yesterday I saw a woman, by herself in her car, wearing a mask. In our ignorance in the first months of the pandemic, imposing the most crushing restrictions on our lives *might* have been justified as we searched for better answers. But for how long? In Pritzker's case, the answer seemed to be for as long as he felt like it.

He got away with this by declaring Illinois to be in a state of emergency. The law gave him broad emergency powers to deal with flooding, tornados, and other natural disasters. The law was vague enough to declare that he could take charge during a pandemic, even though the law cuts off this power after thirty days.

Not that it mattered. Pritzker unilaterally declared that he could extend the statewide emergency indefinitely by declaring a new emergency every thirty days. The Illinois Policy Institute, a non-partisan research organization, in March 2022 counted how often he has done so.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Pritzker has declared a disaster 27 times and issued 112 related orders—from requiring vaccinations and masks to taking over agency operations. He, in effect, has been the boss of everyone in Illinois, for more than *eight hundred days*.

As of this writing, his consecutive thirty-day emergency orders persist through the summer of 2022, with his excuse that an Illinois “emergency” continues.

He did this even though COVID-19 death rates have gone way down because the new versions of the virus are much weaker — now little different from the flu virus we catch almost every year. That is science, by the way. Each new generation of a virus is almost always weaker than the one that came before it. That is the virus’s “survival mechanism.” Because if a virus killed everyone, it too would die.

Too many go-along Illinois Democrats are either comfortable with or try to justify the governor’s extreme measures.

They failed us by not seeing and then doing what other states successfully did — for example Florida, South Dakota, or Texas (and even advanced Western European nations like Sweden, Norway, and Denmark) — when they ended or never imposed lockdowns and mask and vaccine requirements; when they let kids go back to school and let workers go back to work, free of boss rule.

In Illinois, our state’s Democrats have become what they once claimed to despise: thug-like *rulers* instead of *representatives* of “we the people” of Illinois. This has to stop.

## 5

# **Our Wreck-the-Economy, *Not-*Stopping-COVID Governor**

I know Governor Pritzker never had to experience financial struggles personally. It's not his fault that he inherited billions of dollars from his legendary businessman father, instead of learning how to manage a budget or a business from the ground up like most of us.

But we should ask him to give the following "thought experiment" a try, anyway.

Imagine that you own and operate a neighborhood dry cleaner. It's a family-run small business in which you're making a living starching shirts and pressing pants, one by one.

You're having enough good days to keep up with the mortgage but not enough to buy a summer home in Wisconsin. Still, you have enough customers to keep the lights on and, maybe, just maybe, enough money made and saved to send a kid or two to college.

Until . . .

A COVID-19 epidemic turns into a pandemic and your state starts shutting down just about everything.

Suddenly, you have no customers. With no revenue, you must let go your three employees who help you dry clean, wash, and press.

They tell you they don't know what they'll do. But what can *you* do? Even if you could keep them, you can't restock your supplies because supplies can't be had. If they could, no one is around to deliver them.

The bank calls, wondering if you can make your mortgage payment. Maybe just the interest that's due? It's a family neighborhood bank — one of the few remaining — so they're afraid of bankruptcy too.

So, what do you do?

Well, what might help is the so-called free money coming from the federal government, money that you or your kids will have to pay back with higher income taxes — just like the income tax increases *for almost everyone like you* in the USA, which were just passed by the Democrats' Congress and signed by Joe Biden this past August. Both of your Illinois U.S. Senators — people you voted for — voted for these tax increases. One is up for re-election this year.

But the federal freebies can only last for a little while. You're raiding your savings account — making your retirement, well, impossible.

Your only salvation is for your governor to call off the dogs and allow people to resume their productive lives and businesses to reopen — as did happen in Florida and some other Republican-governed states.

Day after day, you check the news to see if this is the day you'll be released from the lockdown.

The waiting goes on and on . . . for days, weeks, months, and now, years!

One version or another of the parade of lockdowns, mandates, and "executive orders" — not votes by your state legislature — cripple your state's economy *and* your small business. The governor says he can't open the state because he's just following "the science" from government experts.

Never mind that the experts' advice was usually confusing, often contradictory, and often wrong . . . so wrong that other states just ignored all of it and returned to normal. But not your state.

Did it ever enter the governor's mind that the economy would shrink when it was shut down like this? Tax revenue would fall and while all the state's employees would remain on full salary (unlike you and your employees), the state pension funds won't be able to guarantee their retirement. That's something you'll both have in common. Did it not even occur to your governor that a collapsed economy can be as painful and destructive as the pandemic?

Apparently not. You decide to move to Indiana, or maybe Tennessee. Anywhere but Illinois.

Illinois is in big trouble. People are abandoning Illinois. Businesses are fleeing the state. Workers have lost their jobs. Businesses are folding, including small



businesses, which are always the most fertile providers of jobs.

The headquarters of corporate giants Boeing, Caterpillar, and Citadel have all left Illinois, taking many millions of dollars in corporate and personal income tax money with them — money needed to pay for essentials like our roads and schools and police. This means more Pritzker tax increases are comin' our way, just like what happened in August in Washington, D.C.

The big corporations left because of out-of-control crime in Chicago and also because of their enormous company tax burden. They had had enough of the perfect storm of property taxes, occupation taxes, unemployment insurance taxes, and workman's compensation taxes — which are often two or three times higher than what they are in Indiana and other next-door states.

Okay, that's just three big corporations. Let's look at these studies:

- A *Harvard University* study shows that the number of Illinois small businesses dropped by 10.4 percent from January 2020 to January 2022. One out of every ten small businesses shut down! And all the jobs these businesses provided are gone too, perhaps even *your* job.
- The non-partisan *National Bureau of Economic Research* gave Illinois an "F" for health, education, and economic outcomes during

the pandemic. In April 2022, this group found that Illinois was the *sixth worst state* in positive outcomes from policies implemented during the pandemic.

- *The Wallet Hub* ranked Illinois *the worst state* for economic inequality.
- *The Illinois Policy Institute* found a 61 percent decline between October 2019 and 2020 in self-employed owners of retail stores — in other words, small businesses. Six out of every ten! They include *71 percent* fewer bar and restaurant owners. Almost three out of four, gone! In March 2022, Illinois was 154,000 jobs short of the number that existed in Illinois prior to the pandemic.

When lockdowns ended, the persecution didn't end. Indoor mask mandates lasted more than a year — only giving us a temporary reprieve before being reinstated. Even as people started to feel like things might be returning to normal, Pritzker reimposed another “emergency” declaration for the entire state. Why?

Enough. This is getting tedious.

The stark fact is that the mandates imposed by Pritzker are what makes ruined Illinois different from prosperous Florida and the other states that stayed open or opened earlier without *any* of the dire COVID health consequences that were predicted.

In fact, despite all the Pritzker mandates, Illinois had the *fifth highest number of COVID cases in the U.S. and eighth highest number of deaths*. In other words, Pritzker's rules did *nothing* to make Illinois deal with COVID better than *any* other state.

Illinois did far worse than many of them.

At the same time, he destroyed thousands of businesses and *lost more than one hundred thousand Illinois jobs*.

Why was Pritzker stubborn? Why didn't he look at what was working in some of the rest of America and do the same?

Was it because he has never had to live in the real world like the rest of us? Because he never ran a business that prospered because it met the needs of its customers? Or was it because he cared more about his political party's power, its financial benefits from being in charge, than the extreme pain of the citizens he was supposed to be caring for and representing as governor?

Many Democrats used to rightly claim to belong to the "Working Man's Party," the middle-class knight, the friend of struggling families. Pritzker has proved that my old Democratic Party is gone, replaced by uncaring boss rule. It's time for Democratic and Independent voters to see that.

## 6

# School Choice for J. B., but Not for Thee

Flush with his billions, J. B. Pritzker has plenty of really nice options in life. For one, he has the choice of where to send his children to school without worrying about the expense.

His children attended two of the most prestigious, expensive, and — one hopes for the money it costs — best private schools in Chicago: Francis W. Parker School (\$36,480–\$42,300/year) and the Latin School of Chicago (\$36,670–\$40,970/year).

Well, Pritzker once explained, the two schools were in effect his “neighborhood schools.” He stated: “Both of my kids go to private school near our home, and that actually was the major reason that we made that decision was that the schools were very close to where we live.”

Aside from the all-important question of his home location, Pritzker himself knows the value of a private school education, having attended the highly selective Milton Academy, a private boarding school in Milton, Massachusetts.

But don't get him wrong. He wants your children to have good schools too, provided you have no say in which one they attend. In other words, schools run by the government in *your* neighborhood—public schools, where you have little or no say about what is being taught or what the results are for your child.

Big public-school districts, like Chicago's, are run by a bloated, expensive, political bureaucracy, which, of course, claims to know better than you about how to educate your children. But the record of success in Chicago schools is so dismal that parents have a right to worry that attending them is actually really bad for their kids.

Pritzker is so attached to the idea that public schools are everywhere and always the best choice for your kids (but not his) that he fiercely opposes giving parents the option, and the financial means, to send their children to better private or religious or business-operated schools—schools of *their* choice.

In this he also fights the popular charter school and school voucher movements with every ounce of his being, despite the popularity of school choice and despite the evidence that some children might be better off in schools of their parents' choice.

Never mind the fact that the principal beneficiaries of school choice are minorities and lower-income families who can't otherwise afford a private or parochial

school education. This is a major betrayal of what has been one of the most loyal Democratic constituencies.

Virtually at every opportunity Pritzker has made his opposition clear. He supports a state law that limits the number of charter schools that are allowed. He opposes a successful and innovative state scholarship program that incentivizes private contributions to make school choice possible. As for direct aid through vouchers? Forget it.

Why would Pritzker oppose such a popular, creative, and successful effort to better educate children and meet their unique needs?

Because the education unions and other government employee unions direct him to fight like hell to oppose choice.

Education unions see choice as a threat to their power to wring high pay and benefits from taxpayers, to control the length of the school day and year, to enrich pensions that have almost bankrupted the state, to maintain absolute control over curriculum, and more.

But why should Pritzker cave in to the unions when he doesn't appear to depend on their sizeable—I should say gargantuan—campaign donations? Aren't his supporters right when they say he's so rich that he doesn't have to suck up to any special interest to finance his own campaign?

You would think so, but it takes more than campaign cash to pay for those endless, boneheaded



television commercials. You need people, their energy, their organization skills, their determination to knock on doors, rally the troops, and make sure you not only turn out to vote but vote “right.” Besides, Pritzker can’t risk the substantial amounts that the unions give to other Democratic candidates in Illinois by antagonizing the government worker unions.

These special interests all launch the standard, tiresome arguments to “prove” that allowing students and their parents to choose their school should be forbidden. Something about how it’ll rob the “real” public schools of money, which is not true. And . . . well, there’s really nothing else that persuasive or true.

The evidence is all in that parents, especially lower-income parents who are struggling to make ends meet, love being able to take their children’s education tax dollars and spend them at the school they want their children to attend.

Recently, school choice legislation has been passed in Arizona and West Virginia. In Florida, black pro-school-choice mothers approving of Governor Ron DeSantis’s school choice stance gave him the extra 100,000 votes he needed to be elected governor.

Here’s a thought experiment that explains how vouchers work: take a look at Chicago’s failed public schools and the taxes that support them.

The cost to “educate” an elementary school student is more than \$20,000 a year. What parent would

not take a voucher worth about \$8,000 of that amount for each child and pay it to a Chicago private, trade, business-operated or parochial school of his or her choice? That is about the cost of a Catholic school education in Chicago.

Since the Chicago Public School System gets \$7.8 billion a year from its close-to-top-in-America high property taxes – about half of the city’s total budget of \$16.7 billion – this means that spending \$8,000 a student could mean cutting Chicago taxes by about 25 percent if Chicago’s system went all voucher.

What’s not to like about cutting your house’s tax bill from \$4,000 down to \$3,000? The education unions and the politicians they donate to (to the tune of \$20 million+ a year) in Illinois would, of course, not like it at all.

As I said, just a “thought experiment,” but it’s something the Pritzker Democrats, who rely on money and political activism from government worker unions, are never going to give you. Other states are doing this, but not Illinois, a state which “is not broken, it is fixed” as one political commentator once ruefully joked.

As if to emphasize the point that they are in charge, the Chicago Teachers Union has gone on strike, again and again, to demand the likes of a 15 percent pay raise over three years and other benefits most of us can only imagine. Pritzker has failed to use his “bully pulpit” to speak on behalf of the abandoned children.

But he has spoken out forcefully against the Illinois Opportunity Scholarship Program, a successful and popular organized volunteer effort that gives low-income and middle-class students, and their parents, choice.

In 2021, some 6,197 scholarships, averaging \$6,600 each were awarded to those students who are thirsty for a better education of their choosing. Empower Illinois, a not-for-profit organization, raised more than \$48 million from donors to allow the kids to attend 430 schools. But Pritzker has been trying to kill the program on behalf of the teachers' unions, and the program was saved only because a bi-partisan group of lawmakers saw too much value in the program to let it die. But because of the opposition and a cap it imposed, only 21 percent of the more than 29,000 applicants for the aid received it. If re-elected, Pritzker will unconscionably target the program again.

Here is yet another example, the latest, of the unions' ripping off Illinois taxpayers: the proposed Amendment 1 to the Illinois Constitution. If you think that unions should only be able to negotiate wages, hours, vacations, and such, you'll be surprised to know that Amendment 1 will expand what can be negotiated far beyond the typical or historic.

If approved in a referendum, the amendment would give unions — public and private — the right to negotiate almost anything that falls under the vague

titles of “safety at work” and “economic welfare.” In other words, virtually anything. The Illinois Policy Institute warns that even existing laws could be overturned in collective bargaining. This sounds to me like an attack on democracy.

No, I’m not opposed to collective bargaining and the right of employees to form unions. I once was an officer and picket committee chairman of the Chicago Newspaper Guild. I know firsthand that negotiations can be tough or sometimes even fruitless, but workers in business have this right.

Government worker unions are different. They all sit on *both sides* of the negotiating table because they donate tens of millions of dollars to the politicians on the *other* side of the negotiating table.

That is why — until government unions in state governments became rich and powerful campaign contributors and political activists — my hero Democrat presidents from Roosevelt and Truman to Kennedy opposed letting government workers unionize. JFK later changed his mind, much to my disappointment.

The union-control-of-public-education problem became even worse after candidate Jimmy Carter, seeking the Democratic Party presidential nomination in 1976, made a deal with the education unions: “You nominate me as your candidate and I will create a new cabinet-level national Department of Education.”

The deal was struck. Education union members

and their relatives were about 40 percent of all delegates to the Democratic national convention in 1976.

Adding in the Southern states where he was popular gave Carter his victory.

Today the Department of Education (DOE) in Washington mandates everything from work rules to textbook choices, in return for giving your tax dollars to school districts who obey its directives . . . most recently, from the Biden administration, now an increasing flow of peculiar and unpopular “gender directives” for textbooks and school bathrooms and locker rooms, directives few voters would approve of for their own schools.

A few years ago, every single Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives voted to mandate that all public schools in America be forced to allow boys who “identify” as girls into every school’s female bathrooms and locker rooms. It passed the House, but the saner U.S. Senate did not allow this legislation to come to a vote. As I have said here before, this is no longer the same Democratic Party I was once a loyal member of.

The Illinois Constitution already contains the lopsided provision that public employee benefits can never be diminished. The tragic result is that the overly generous pension benefits must remain in place even if the costs are bludgeoning the state.

To wit: the five public sector pension funds managed by the state are short *\$140 billion* to roughly *\$300*

*billion* or somewhere in the stratosphere, depending on the method of accounting. In the worst-case equivalent, that would mean that every penny of Illinois's operating budget for some seven years would go into pensions. Nothing left for schools, highways, social services, or anything else.

Giving any special interest group veto power over laws enacted by representatives of the people is one more betrayal of the principles that I used to consider near and dear to the hearts of Democrats. Now Illinois Democrats, including Pritzker, act as if their lives depend on squelching school choice, much to the harm of the very people they represent.



## 7

# Character Is Supposed to Count

J. B. Pritzker's infamous toilet bowl scandal reveals just how cheesy and fraudulent one person can get.

The billionaire years ago bought the mansion next door to his lavish Gold Coast digs, apparently not for anyone to live there, but as a tax dodge. By removing the toilets, the home was declared uninhabitable, which lowered its value, and substantially reduced its property tax.

How much did Pritzker save? An estimated \$330,000. That's enough for some of us to buy a home. But for someone who's worth \$3.6 billion — reportedly America's richest politician — \$330,000 is chump change.

But he did it anyway, so for a brief while wags in the press began calling him "Governor Toilets."

Pritzker eventually paid. But what does this say about his character? A fraud? Cheat? Greedy? Keep in mind that his scheme cost taxpayers. While your share of the \$330,000 would hardly be noticed, in this single act, Pritzker has revealed a gross disregard

of the public interest. A way to dump his personal expenses onto you and me. Didn't he already have enough money?

In Pritzker, Illinois voters thought they finally had found a true-blue, likeable, honest candidate. Illinois could hold large parades of convicted political grafters, boodlers, chiselers, and similar bottom feeders.

An heir to the Hyatt hotel fortune, Pritzker had never been indicted or convicted of corruption. With all that money, he naturally would not be steering friends and insiders to generous government contracts, would he? What could possibly go wrong?

Quite a lot, it turned out. To appreciate how Pritzker's character influences his Democratic Party policies, we must take a look at some not-so-interesting political stuff that may be boring to anyone used to corruption. Skip ahead in this book if you already know all this.

## **Ethics Reform**

Everyone says they're for ethics reform. A government that isn't being looted certainly is more effective. And so, Pritzker boasted: "We've passed and I've signed ethics reform," celebrating as if world peace had arrived.

In compliance with our old "The Illinois Way," his reform didn't change anything at all. It prompted

Legislative Inspector General Carol Pope immediately to resign. It makes her a “toothless tiger,” she said. Years of mostly Democrat Party control has made “ethics reform” in Illinois no more than a game of “Let’s Pretend.” Yes, Illinois Republicans have shared in the boodle, but the main beneficiaries during the last, maybe seventy, years have been Democrats.

### **Gerrymandering**

In Republican states, Democrats typically accuse Republicans of drawing legislative districts that favor the GOP. In Illinois, Democrats have this gerrymandering down to a fine art that has insured Democratic Party control of the state for many decades. Republicans have been reduced to an almost-ineffective small minority.

However, Pritzker, during his campaign, “pledged” to veto any map featuring lopsided advantages for anyone. “Fair and square J. B.”

Old-time politicians probably were laughing behind their hands at the fantasy he could single-handedly undo something so entrenched in Illinois politics. So, when the Democratic-controlled legislature passed a map with most of the old inequities, did Pritzker (A) veto it as he promised or (B) sign it anyway? Of course, the answer is (B).

## Corruption

No more tolerating Illinois's legendary political corruption. Honest to God, Pritzker promised this. A few months after his pledge, the Feds — not Illinois law enforcement, of course — indicted Democratic House Speaker Michael Madigan, arguably the state's most powerful politician and the nation's longest serving state-house speaker.

As the evidence piled up signaling the upcoming indictment, Madigan resigned, but *not* at Pritzker's urging. The governor skipped a "good riddance" comment for all the destruction the state has suffered under Madigan's autocratic hand. Instead, Pritzker proclaimed in a statement, "The people of Illinois have much to be grateful for thanks to [Madigan's] dedicated public service."

Loyalty to the party is the coin of the realm for Illinois Democrats, not so for loyalty to you, the citizen of Illinois. It's a far cry from, for example, the distinguished, straight-arrow Democrat, former Illinois Lt. Governor Paul Simon, a man too honest to be allowed by his party ever to become governor, I am guessing.

## The Budget

Perhaps Pritzker's biggest whopper was his claim that he has "balanced" the Illinois budget. Well, not just balanced it, but he came up with a \$1.7 billion surplus. This for a state with one of the worst credit ratings,

largest accrued debts, and its vendors — especially our state’s hospitals — often stiffed with bill payments months and even years past due.

Wow, that was big news for a state that hasn’t balanced its budget since 2001. How, did Pritzker and his pack of Democrat legislators pull off this miracle?

The Illinois Policy Institute unpeeled that claim. It turned out the budget failed to mention a thing or two. Among them was the huge deficit from last year. You can’t pretend that this obligation just — poof! — disappeared. When you include the huge deficit from the previous year, the IPI said, the budget was \$1.5 billion in deficit.

What Pritzker *did* include is the one-time \$14 billion in federal pandemic aid from taxpayers all across America. But that’s a one-time payment and so the next year, Illinois will be back in the red.

Never mind that. Pritzker’s TV ads boldly and dishonestly suggest that the governor fixed the state’s unique and huge financial problems. Shame and honesty aren’t his strong suits. In my forty-plus years as a Chicago journalist, I’ve met true reform politicians in both political parties. Pritzker ain’t one of them.

## 8

# **Your Taxes Will Make Illinois America's Abortion Capital**

Governor J. B. Pritzker is proud that he has finally found an industry that wants to come to Illinois: abortion.

It makes sense, because under Pritzker, Illinois has crafted the nation's most extreme law, allowing unrestricted abortions all the way up to the date of a natural birth. While people and businesses are fleeing in record numbers from Illinois, Pritzker is celebrating the fact that the state will become an abortion oasis among surrounding states afflicted with "anti-choice" laws.

Women already are being invited from Wisconsin, Indiana, and elsewhere to come to abortion clinics expected to spring up like mushrooms near Illinois borders to accommodate the expected stream.

That's made possible by Illinois's Reproductive Health Act, arguably the least restrictive, most radical abortion law in America. Under it, abortions can be performed up to the moment of birth, for virtually any reason. And Illinois citizens — you and me — will



help pay for some of these abortions for out-of-state people.

Some readers will assume that I'm exaggerating. They should read the law; it's short and perfectly clear. It says *any* health care professional, even those not doctors, can end a pre-born life if he or she thinks it's okay. How many Planned Parenthood abortionists do you think will say no?

Nowhere in the law do you find any restrictions on when or how it can be done. No ban after, say, fifteen weeks.

Nothing to protect a fourteen-year-old from being taken to a clinic without her parents' knowledge so her twenty-five-year-old "boyfriend" can rid himself of the "problem." No waiting periods.

It will be no problem at all finding a "health care professional" to "terminate" a healthy fetus with the gruesome late-term procedure commonly known as partial birth abortion, where the baby is delivered feet-first up to the head, and then the head is punctured and the brain is sucked out so the baby can be delivered dead.

Nothing to require some consideration — none at all — be given to the idea that the state has an interest in protecting even "potential life."

This is all possible because the fetus/child in the womb/developing person (or whatever you want to call him or her), the unique life within, has absolutely no rights. None.

The law couldn't be any clearer. It declares, "A fertilized egg, embryo, or fetus does not have independent rights under the laws of this State." Period. Certainly not a right to life. Or even a right to basic medical care. No more protections than a wart. Stunning.

The law does mention fetal viability. If the baby can survive outside the womb, it says, an abortion can only be performed if it's to "protect the life and health of the patient."

It's the same language taken straight out of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Doe v. Bolton* that defines "health" as "*any* factor, emotional, economic, psychological, familial, or physical. "

In other words, any reason at all.

Sorry for the legalese, but it's necessary to explain how far Pritzker and the Illinois Democratic Party are out of the mainstream. For decades, public opinion polls have demonstrated that Americans reject both of the two absolutist positions: abortions for any reason at any time and total abortion bans with no exceptions. Most people are somewhere in the middle.

According to Gallup, more than half of Americans believe that abortion should be legal, but always with some restrictions. Roughly two-thirds say abortion should be legal only in the first three months. That puts Pritzker and Illinois Democrats in the same 24 percent minority who believe that abortion should be legal under any circumstance.

Pritzker led the charge to kill the Illinois law that required parents to be notified if their minor daughter was to undergo an abortion. The law didn't even require that parents give their consent. They are ordered into the corner over there and told to shut up. Imagine, parents can't have a say in a serious medical procedure on their minor child, when a school nurse can't give a child so much as an aspirin without parental consent.

Pritzker is engaging in obvious demagoguery, acting as if abortion will ever be banned in Illinois. Not even close. Maybe when the Cubs and the White Sox meet in the World Series, if ever. Never, especially, will Illinois prohibit abortion in cases of rape and incest.

Most Americans — pro-life and some pro-choice — want commonsense restrictions that respect parents, young women, and children alike.

Yet, Pritzker and the Democratic Party see their lethal policies as an opening to regain the women's vote, especially suburban women who have been lost because of their anger over the damage the governor and his minions have done to children with classroom lockdowns and other decrees.

Perhaps the strategy is right because, frankly, so few people are interested in or know the details of this horrific law. They've been told that Pritzker's idea of "pro-choice" is somehow moderate. It is, instead, radical.

And so, Pritzker is “reaching out” to other states to set up clinics in Illinois, close to the borders to lure businesses and jobs to Illinois. Some 20,000 to 30,000 women from out of state are expected to arrive annually.

Never mind the strain on Illinois taxpayers. State Medicaid already pays for certain abortions. But already abortion lobbyists are demanding more. And getting it.

Medicaid reimbursement rates to abortion providers in Illinois are being increased by 20 percent. Millions more are being made available for low-income patients. Other funds are being sought for clinic security, expanded facilities and, yes, travel costs for out-of-state women.

Just how much Illinois taxpayers will have to cough up to staff and operate the fleet of near-border clinics isn’t yet known. But you can bet that you will be paying for women from Des Moines, Madison, and Indianapolis to have their abortions in Illinois.

There was a time that the Democratic “Big Tent” had room for pro-lifers. Years ago, former Governor Robert Casey, a liberal Pennsylvania Democrat, was a good example, until, that is, he was banned from giving a speech at a Democratic convention because he failed to pass the abortion litmus test.

Nat Hentoff, himself a liberal pro-lifer, arranged to have Casey give his planned speech at the historic

Great Hall of Cooper Union in New York. But it didn't happen. "Hooligans" and "speech muggers" began shouting and screaming, driving Casey from the stage.

That was in 1992. Can anyone tell me that Democrats now running the party have become any more tolerant today?

Abortion is not going to be banned in Illinois, not ever. There isn't even an attempt being made. All that Illinois citizens desire is reasonable regulations.

There has to be a middle ground that reflects the majority opinion of Illinois voters, and that does not require our taxpayer money to attract people from other states for abortions here, especially for healthy babies who are old enough to survive outside a mother's womb.

That is called "democracy."

## 9

# So, What Does J. B. Pritzker Have in Mind, for You and Your Family, If He Is Re-elected?

He's been described as a "down-to-earth billionaire," "charismatic," "affable," a "dedicated family man" and "a nice guy."

No argument from me on any of these points.

*In this book I have tried to focus on his policies and how they affect you — the people and the small-business owners of Illinois. My conclusion is: what his re-election means is not good at all.*

He has pursued the same policies that drove old liberal Democrat me out of the Democratic Party — policies that on both the state and national levels have not just failed to solve our problems but have made them even worse: more spending, more tax increases, more actions to cement his political party's power in Illinois politics — forever.

Those policies have been exclusionary, divisive, arrogant, ineffective, and even pointless. They have been destructive of democracy's highest principles, such as respect for contrary views.



Another four years of Pritzker as governor, abetted by a compliant, one-party legislature should be—even to most old-style liberals and moderates—terrifying.

- Can we expect, for example, more pandemic dictates that aren't supported by science, dictates that seems like they are merely an exercise of power for power's sake?
- Will Pritzker continue to deny the consequences of his classroom lockdowns and other punishing steps against the welfare of our children? Will he show the same disregard for your economic welfare? Can we really take that risk in a state that already is hemorrhaging people and jobs?
- Will he keep trying to increase gasoline taxes, as he did with his 30-cents increase a few years ago, also allowing his 3-cents-a-year increase to continue? That means 30 cents more per gallon ten years from now, unless you can afford to buy a \$60,000 electric car or truck, a vehicle whose distance-driven-per-charge can drop by half during Illinois's really cold winter months. That is the true science of electricity efficiency they don't tell you about. Cold weather makes the wiring unable to move the power as fast as it does in hot weather.

- Will he try again, even after its rejection by the voters, to repeal the state's flat income tax and tier it to increase income taxes on the middle-income families who rejected his proposal? Will he move to tax retirement income?
- Will he continue to be the handmaid of the powerful government unions, doing their bidding on such matters as school choice for people far, far less wealthy than he is?
- Will he stand bravely to lead to real, substantial change in the state's culture of corruption? Will he lead on ethics reform?
- Will he continue to take credit for a budget that he falsely claimed is balanced? Does he have the guts to honestly explain how government worker pensions are dragging down the state into a financial and economic pit?
- Can he craft a truly effective program to fight the state's now-dreadful crime problem? Will he forcefully try to reverse no-cash bail and other extreme policies that favor the criminals over the victims?
- Will he disavow the radical abortion policies, like forcing you to pay for out-of-staters to come to Illinois for subsidized abortions, a policy the national Democrats insist on?

Pritzker has given no sign that he will alter course on any of these issues.

So, my question is: Will you, my readers, pull away from your own traditional voting history and move into the unfamiliar territory of independent judgment? Even if it means voting for “the other guy,” even a guy who has a few political views you don’t like? Maybe asking yourself, “Who could possibly be worse than Pritzker has been – and promises to be – if re-elected?” will help you decide.

A recent non-partisan survey revealed that more Illinoisans want to leave their home state, *more than half of you than the residents of any other state*. And over the last decade they’ve done so, with Illinoisans routinely leading the nation in out-migration, said the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at SIU.

*With the highest combined state and local tax burden in the country*, the lawlessness in the state’s crown jewel (Chicago), and the corruption everywhere, everyone understands why.

So the question becomes, how much worse does it have to get before we make a change in leadership to offer at least the possibility of a change in our state’s future?

To make a change means taking a risk. It means many of you will have to temporarily step outside of your old political comfort zone.

To *not* make a change also entails risk.

In fact, hoping things get better with the same people pursuing the same destructive policies outlined in this book is actually the most hopeless choice of all.

So, this November, what's it going to be, Illinois? I am both hopeful and anxious about your answer.

## About the Author

Dennis Byrne is a native Chicagoan and long-time journalist who was variously an op-ed columnist, editorial board member, science writer, transportation reporter, and urban affairs writer for the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, and *Chicago Daily News*.

He blogs at The Barbershop: Dennis Byrne, Proprietor, and is also the author of the historical novel *Madness: The War of 1812*. He now lives in Florida with his wife, Barbara, and their extended family.