

CHAMBER DAY 2021

BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS



SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER DAN McCONCHIE

Dan McConchie is the State Senator for the 26th District of Illinois and has served in this role since April 2016. He currently serves as Minority Spokesperson for the Appropriations II Committee and the State Government Committee, and is a member of the Public Health, Higher Education, Insurance, Labor, and Telecommunications and Info Technology committees.

Throughout his tenure as a legislator, Dan has worked and advocated for balanced budgets, smaller government, lower taxes, and the need for fundamental reforms that encourage economic growth. Dan has championed legislation and policies to make state government more efficient and helped to bring more equity to the state's school funding system.

Professionally, Dan is an energy consultant with Verde Solutions, a full service energy consulting firm.

With a heart for service, Dan joined the Army National Guard on his 17th birthday serving nine years in the infantry and military police.

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

Illinois' 26th Senate District is in the northwest Chicago suburbs and includes all or part of Algonquin, Barrington, Carpentersville, Cary, Crystal Lake, Deer Park, Fox River Grove, Green Oaks, Hawthorn Woods, Hoffman Estates, Island Lake, Kildeer, Lake in the Hills, Lake Zurich, Libertyville, Long Grove, Mundelein, Oakwood Hills and Vernon Hills.

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HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER JIM DURKIN

With a focus on protecting and strengthening families and communities, Jim Durkin has spent his entire career working for the citizens of Illinois. Jim was born into a large Chicago family of eight boys. Raised in the western suburb of Westchester, Jim and all seven of his brothers graduated from Fenwick High School. He attended Illinois State University and earned a degree in Criminal Justice, and completed his formal education by receiving his Juris Doctor from the John Marshall Law School. Following his graduation from law school, Jim served as an Assistant Illinois Attorney General. Jim continued his public service as an assistant Cook County state's attorney. While working as an assistant state's attorney, Jim served in the felony trial and narcotics bureaus. Jim currently practices law in the City of Chicago.

In January 1995, Jim became an Illinois State Representative in the 44th district. In 2002, Jim was the Republican nominee for United States Senate but was unsuccessful in his bid to defeat U.S. Senator Dick Durbin. In 2006, Jim was appointed to fill a vacancy in the 82nd House District and has successfully run for re-election. Jim served as the ranking Republican on the Illinois House of Representatives Special Investigation Committee for the impeachment of Governor Blagojevich in 2008, and in 2012 served as the House Manager for the removal of a sitting member of the Illinois House of Representatives.

In August of 2013, Jim was unanimously selected by his Republican colleagues to fill the vacancy of House Republican Leader and was officially inaugurated by the full House of Representatives on October 22, 2013.

During the 100th General Assembly, Jim worked tirelessly with members on both sides of the aisle to successfully negotiate a new education funding formula for our state. Now the law of the land, Senate Bill 1947 ensures that all students across Illinois receive adequate and equitable school funding regardless of where they live or income status. Jim was also the chief sponsor of Senate Bill 1722 which now gives judges the ability to crack down on repeat gun offenders by giving harsher penalties. This measure will reduce gun violence plaguing communities across our state.

Jim's dedication to the people of Illinois has earned him several honors. Throughout his career, he has been bestowed several awards and recognitions such as Legislator of the Year (Builders Association, 2016), Friend of Agriculture (Illinois Farm Bureau, 2016), Outstanding Legislator of the Year (Illinois Association of Park Districts 2015 and MS Society of Greater Illinois 2014), Family Legacy Award (Illinois Crime Commission 2014) and several more throughout the last two decades.

In 2000 and 2008, Jim was State Chairman for U.S. Senator John McCain's presidential campaigns and served as Chairman for the Illinois Delegation at the 2008 Republican National Convention in Minneapolis. Jim currently serves on the John Marshall Law School Board of Trustee's, Misericordia Board of Advisors, Giant Steps of Illinois Board of Directors and JDRE Illinois Board of Directors.

Jim currently resides in Western Springs with his wife and family.

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HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER GREG HARRIS

Greg Harris was elected to the Illinois General Assembly in 2006 and is Majority Leader of the House of Representatives. Harris serves as State Representative for the 13th District which includes parts of Uptown, Ravenswood, Lincoln Square, North Center, West Ridge and Bowmanville. Harris is a gay elected official in the State of Illinois, who is also openly living with HIV, and is the first openly gay person in Illinois to become a member of Legislative Leadership. He is Chairman of the Rules Committee, and serves on the Appropriation–Human Services Committee and Wages and Rates Subcommittee. He is a member of the Illinois Juvenile Justice Leadership Council and the joint Legislative Health

Insurance Exchange Committee. He also serves as chairman on the Violence Prevention Task Force and is a member of the Racial and Ethnic Impact Research Task Force, the Quality of Life Board and the House Task Force on Sexual Discrimination and Harassment.

Currently, his interests include state finances, mental health and substance abuse issues, addressing the needs of Illinois's homeless and at-risk youth, comprehensive breast cancer services, marriage equality, trans issues, protecting people with disabilities, nursing home quality, and affordable, accessible healthcare. He has been a major sponsor of healthcare reform and insurance reform, breast cancer legislation, and was the Chief Sponsor of the Illinois Marriage Equality law.

Harris received the Legislative Champion for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities award, the 2010 Illinois School Counselor Association Legislator of the Year Award, 3 Friend of Agriculture Awards from the Illinois Farm Bureau, and is the first person to receive Gay Chicago Magazine's Person of the Year honor. He has also received 2 awards from the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless for his leadership on issues surrounding youth homelessness. Rep. Harris was presented with the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Champion for the Cure Award, the Chicago House Public Service Award, and was also honored with the Friend for Life Award by the Howard Brown Health Center. He has been the recipient of Equality Illinois' 2009 Freedom Award and was recognized by Test Positive Aware Network for his work in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

In addition, He has also received the Visionary Award from Chinese Mutual Aid Association, Share the Care Champion from Almost Home Kids and the Thresholds Hero Award, Legislative Award 2015 from Neumann Family Services, Light the Darkness 2016 The Community Service Award from nami Chicago, 2016 Distinguished Advocacy Award Illinois from The American Cancer Society.

Rep. Harris has been recognized for service to various Chicago communities by awards from Travelers and Immigrants Aid, Voice of the People, the Uptown Chamber of Commerce, the AIDS Foundation of Chicago, the Chinese Mutual Aid Society, Ethiopian Community Organization, Korean American Community Services, Asian Human Services, The NAMES Project and others.

Representative Harris serves on the Honorary Boards of Interfaith Ministry for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Apna Ghar Domestic Violence Shelter. Harris and former Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley shared the Human Rights Campaign "Equality" Award.

Prior to entering public service, Harris served in a number of Senior Management positions with the National Home Furnishings Association.

Greg Harris served for 14 years as Chief of Staff for Alderman Mary Ann Smith of Chicago's 48th Ward. He co-chaired the City of Chicago's Task Force on LGBT Substance Use/Abuse and as a member of the Crystal Meth Task Force. He is a founder and first Board President of both Open Hand Chicago and of AIDSWalk Chicago. He has served as chair of Lesbians and Gays in Government, and as a member of the Public Policy and Advocacy Committee of the AIDS Foundation of Chicago. He has served as a Board member of Open Hand Chicago and as a member of the Chicago Area HIV Service Planning Council, a Board Member of the Non-Profit Financial Center, the AIDS Legal Council, and as a Director of the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights.

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KEVIN COURTOIS

Kevin Courtois (*cort-wah*) is Executive Director of Congressional and Public Affairs at the U.S. Chamber's Great Lakes Regional Office. To achieve the U.S. Chamber's public policy goals, Kevin cultivates and maintains legislative, political, media and grassroots resources throughout Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Kevin leads the U.S. Chamber's efforts to strengthen its relationships with Members of Congress through member businesses, associations, and local and state chambers of commerce across the region.

Before joining the U.S. Chamber in 2015, Kevin spent five years in Washington, D.C. where he worked for Senator Chuck Grassley's Finance Committee staff during its consideration of the Affordable Care Act. He also served on Senator Grassley's Judiciary Committee staff where he handled health policy issues and federal judicial nominations. While working on Capitol Hill, Kevin attended evening classes at the George Mason University School of Law before completing his last year at Northwestern Law School in Chicago, where he currently resides.

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MICHAEL PAONE

MICHAEL PAONE is the Vice President of Governmental Affairs at the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the largest and most active Business Organization in Will County. Mike has worked with numerous businesses and organizations in the Joliet region to help increase their awareness and bottom line through various member benefits and opportunities.

Under his leadership, the Chamber brought in more than 2,000 members equaling \$750,000+, adopted and implemented eight successful membership drives, and has added many program offerings for its members. Mike is the co-creator of the Joliet Area Young Professionals (JAYP), the African American Business Association (AABA), and the creator of two Chamber referral groups known as Business Builders. In addition to overseeing membership, Mike works closely with the JAYP and AABA Board of Directors as their ex-officio. Mike is also the ex-officio leader of the Chamber Ambassadors, a volunteer group of 40 plus Chamber members. Mike has co-designed three new Chamber web sites and has implemented the Chamber's social media program. He has been an integral part of Chamber marketing and communication plans. In his new role as Vice President he has become more involved with legislative and community affairs; planning governmental lobby trips to the State Capitol and Washington DC, in addition to city government relations.

Currently Mike serves as the Government Affairs Chair of the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives Board, a past Regent for the U.S. Chamber Institute for Organization Management, is a 2008 graduate of the program (IOM designation) and past class advisor. Mike is a 2001 Joliet Chamber Community Leadership School graduate, United Way of Will County board member, Cornerstone Services board member, member of the Joliet Kiwanis club, past board member of the Joliet Catholic Academy Alumni Assoc., and many other committees.

Mike received his Bachelor's Degree from the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois and currently resides in Joliet with his wife Carleen and two sons Brandon & Alexander. He enjoys family vacations, coaching and supporting his sons sports, as well as playing in Fantasy Sports Leagues and golfing when he has the opportunity to do so.