

PEOPLE FIRST

Fighting for working families in Illinois



December 2017

Investing in Career and Technical Training Is Good for Students, Business and Illinois

Students throughout Chicago's northwest suburbs are preparing to become future machinists, computer networkers, auto mechanics, home builders and chefs right here in our own local high schools, thanks to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that are available.

With an estimated 30 percent of students nationwide not going to college, these options are more important than ever, providing job skills and avenues to success.

"An investment in CTE is good for students, businesses and our economy," Ann said. "They provide great options for students and a much-needed skilled labor force for companies to thrive. Robust job training programs will also entice businesses to move to Illinois."

Last month, Ann toured School District 211's vocational education facilities at Conant, Fremd and Palatine high schools along with Illinois Federation of Teachers Local 1211 President John Braglia. Ann's tour included a first-hand look at culinary, robotics and construction (including modeling) programs at Conant; machinist and computer networking programs at Palatine; and auto mechanics at Fremd.

"Seeing these programs first-hand strengthens my belief that the most important strategy for recruiting and keeping businesses in Illinois is to invest in education and our people," Ann said. "Schools, local businesses and unions—working together—help prepare students for the careers of tomorrow. A skilled workforce attracts businesses, which makes for a strong economy."

These programs build skills over multiple years, often earning students dual credit in partnership with colleges. Local businesses also strongly support the programs, whether through equipment donations, apprenticeship opportunities or jobs for graduates.

Ann said the passion and pride of both the teachers and students she met was amazing. "The culinary students at Conant showed us the breakfast items they were making for a Veterans Day event with Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi; the machinist students at Palatine demonstrated their work and gave us samples of some of the items they were making; in Fremd's auto mechanics class, students showed us how they were rebuilding engines," Ann said. "It was exciting to see both young women and men in all of the classes we visited and the pride they had in the work they were doing."

As an Illinois Senator, Ann will fight to expand state partnerships with unions and businesses to invest more in CTE statewide.

"A skilled workforce attracts businesses, which, in turn, makes for a strong economy."

*- Ann Gillespie,
candidate for
Illinois Senate,
27th District*

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Ann recently toured District 211's vocational educational facilities at Conant, Fremd and Palatine high schools.

Building a Better Tomorrow

If you build it, they will come. Fortunately for Illinois, we don't have to build it—but we also can't take that for granted. The "it" we're talking about is the state's infrastructure. Think roads, bridges and rail. Businesses use them to move goods out or deliver packages to your house. Employees use them to get to and from work. Those same employees return to their homes each day, where they know they'll flip a switch and have light or turn the faucet and get clean water. All of this is infrastructure. And it is often taken for granted.

Our infrastructure and location as a transportation hub is one of Illinois' major assets. Businesses want to be here because of it, and Ann knows this from personal experience. When Ann was the general manager of CVS Caremark's Mt. Prospect Mail Prescription Pharmacy Distribution Center, the company had a choice to relocate and expand in Texas or stay put in Illinois. Texas had obvious benefits including lower wage rates and potential tax incentives that were considerable. The advantages of expanding in Illinois were less obvious, but after running the numbers, it was clear to Ann that staying put was the best choice.

"Illinois is the transportation hub of the country. This helps attract business and people more than any other single factor," Ann said. "As a mail-order facility, being centrally located was important."

Also important were the hidden costs of higher employee turnover when wages are lower, as would have been the case in Texas. And here in the Chicago area, CVS could pull qualified, trained staff from three pharmacy schools and several pharmacy tech certification programs at community colleges. Our infrastructure was a major factor in the decision. CVS Caremark stayed and expanded at a new facility in Mt. Prospect, saving more than 500 jobs.

"I know from experience that investing in infrastructure is the best incentive money can buy if you want to grow business and the economy," Ann said.

But if we're not careful, we'll lose our advantage. For the last 20 years, infrastructure repair and modernization have not kept up with surrounding states. We're underfunding this important investment, and The American Society for Civil Engineering gave the state a C-minus rating on its last report card in 2014.

Financial restraints have hampered the state since then, due in part to the budget crisis of the past two years. As a result, our infrastructure continues to deteriorate. In addition to more than 2,200 deficient bridges in the state, we are now looking at an outdated and dangerous lead pipe water system, fighting Asian carp in waterways leading into Lake Michigan, and crumbling school buildings with inadequate technology.

Bringing our state's infrastructure into the 21st century also includes giving full consideration to environmental concerns. Planning should take the impact of global climate change into consideration. And the state should invest in green technologies such as solar and wind electrical power and electric-powered vehicles for its fleets.

"All of these investments would mean jobs for Illinois workers," Ann said. "So many factors are linked to having a strong, modern infrastructure, and we cannot allow Illinois to lose its edge in these areas. It's too important to our state economy."



Ann recently volunteered at the 2018 Arise Chicago Annual Faith-Labor-Action Breakfast. She has been a supporter of Arise Chicago for several years. This was her second year volunteering at the event.

Ann with Arise Chicago Executive Director Rev. CJ Hawking.

It's Official!

Ann traveled to Springfield earlier this month and filed as a Democratic candidate for Illinois State Senate in the 27th District. She filed more than 2,000 signatures thanks to dozens of volunteers who covered more than 60 precincts throughout the district. They knocked on doors, collected signatures and attended events to get out the message that we need to put people first in Illinois.

Did you know?

Ann is endorsed by:

- Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky
- Illinois Senator Laura Murphy
- Illinois Senator Heather Steans
- Illinois Senator Tony Munoz
- Illinois Representative Robyn Gabel
- Illinois Representative Sara Feigenholtz



Ann filing at the Board of Elections in Springfield.

Palatine ESPA Fight Moves from Streets to the Courts

Fifteen days after walking out of class, members of the Palatine District 15 Educational Support Personnel Association (ESPA) NEA/IEA went back to the classroom. They acted in the interest of their members and the students in response to anti-union and, according to ESPA, illegal actions taken by the school district.

As reported by WBEZ Nov. 30, other unions are taking notice. One union official said it reminded him of the action President Ronald Reagan took against the Air Traffic Controllers Union in the 1980s.

But the union has not given up the fight. Members returned to work after a temporary restraining order against the union was overturned and the district threatened to replace the striking workers.

Now the union has lawsuits and dozens of unfair labor practice complaints against the district. Some are in response to the district canceling members' health insurance policies on the day the strike started, even though the members had paid for the policies through the end of the month and despite the district's standard practice.

Another complaint relates to the district's claim that it had reached an impasse and was threatening to bring in strike breakers to replace union members. Under Illinois education labor law, it's very difficult for either side to declare an impasse, and the union believes that no such impasse existed.

For union members, the strike is not over. It has only moved from the streets to the courts and the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board. The issues are critical for all unions in Illinois, especially public sector unions.

Ann and her campaign have actively supported the Palatine ESPA. She has walked with the union on multiple occasions and has sent supplies to its strike headquarters. Her campaign also uses its grassroots connections to promote community participation in support of the union members.

"We will continue to support these brave working-class warriors because they are the heart of the fight for the middle class," Ann said

Help Send Ann to Springfield!

Ann has been busy connecting with union leaders across the state to introduce herself, learn more about union needs and discuss ideas about union-partnered vocational education programs.

If you haven't had a chance to meet her, please call or email to get something on the calendar.

Host a coffee

Help us spread the word! Share Ann's website, Facebook page and Twitter on social media. Better yet, host a coffee or wine/cheese event for your friends and family. Ann will be happy to come meet with them personally.

Volunteer

From canvassing to data entry, we'll find a way for you to get involved that plays to your strengths. Sign up at www.AnnForIllinois.org.

Donate

Every dollar counts, whether you can contribute \$10, \$25 or \$100. Visit www.AnnForIllinois.org.

Contact Us

Visit the website or give us a call to learn more about Ann and how you can get involved.

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Paid for by Citizens for Ann Gillespie. A copy of our report filed with the State Board of Elections is available for purchase from the State Board of Elections, Springfield, Illinois.



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