

OFFICE OF THE ILLINOIS LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR JULIANA STRATTON
 Illinois Council on Women and Girls
 1st Quarterly Meeting Minutes
 Thurs, March 19, 2026

A present majority of filled non-ex-officio positions shall constitute a quorum: i.e. 12 members present				
Position	Name	Present	Phone	Absent
Ex-Officio Mem.				
Chair, Ex-Officio (LG's Office)	Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton	X		
Ex-Officio (Refugee & Immigrant Services, DHS)	Karina Lopez			X
Ex-Officio (Dept. on Aging)	Jennifer Hebel		X	
Ex-Officio (Dept. of Human Rights)	Dr. Chris Smith		X	
Ex-Officio (Dept. of Children & Family Services)	Marla Courts			X
Ex-Officio (Dept. of Healthcare & Fam. Services)	Dorian Manion		X	
Ex-Officio (Dept. of Public Health	Ashley Thoele		X	
Ex-Officio (Dept. of Labor)	Director Jane Flanagan	X		
Ex-Officio (State Board of Ed.)	Vacant			X
Ex-Officio (Board of Higher Ed.)	Rachel Bolinger		X	
Ex-Officio (Community College Board)	Natasha Allan			X
Pub. Mem. (Gov.)				
Pub. Mem. (Gov.)	Mayor Nancy Rotering		X	
Pub. Mem. (Gov.)	Gaylon Alcaraz		X	
Pub. Mem. (Gov.)	Nikita Richards Calahan			X
Pub. Mem. (Gov.)	Melissa Flores	X		
Pub. Mem. (House Min.)				
Pub. Mem. (House Min.)	Theresa Forthofer		X	
Pub. Mem. (House Min.)	Ines Kutlesa		X	
Pub. Mem. (House Min.)	Vacant			
Pub. Mem. (House Min.)	Vacant			
Pub. Mem. (House Speaker)				
Pub. Mem. (House Speaker)	Rep. Debbie Meyers-Martin			X
Pub. Mem. (House Speaker)	Kaethe Morris Hoffer			X
Pub. Mem. (House Speaker)	Vacant			
Pub. Mem. (House Speaker)	Wendy Pollack		X	
Pub. Mem. (Sen. Min.)				

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Pub. Mem. (Sen. Min.)	Vacant			
Pub. Mem. (Sen. Min.)	Vacant			
Pub. Mem. (Sen. Min.)	Vacant			
Pub. Mem. (Sen. Min.)	Vacant			
Pub. Mem. (Sen. Pres.)				
Pub. Mem. (Sen. Pres.)	Sylvia Collins		X	
Pub. Mem. (Sen. Pres.)	Rochelle Crump			X
Pub. Mem. (Sen. Pres.)	Amina Jaffer		X	
Pub. Mem. (Sen. Pres.)	Vacant			
Rep. of Gov.'s Office Mem.				
Rep. of Gov.'s Office	Angela Clark		X	
Guest (non-member)				
Guest	Alexia Hammond		X	
Guest	Lisa Masinter		X	
Guest	Natalie Nash	X		

Office of the Lieutenant Governor Staff Present

- Nikki Giancola-Shanks, Policy Director
- Rob Baren, Senior Advisor to the Lt. Governor
- Eva Shonuga, Staff Attorney
- Jerry Dominguez Correa, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
- Alex Sprinkle, ISPP Scholar
- Mahi Patel, Dunn Fellow
- Maria Peterson, Policy Analyst

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Agenda

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call
- II. Approval of the Agenda for 3/19/26
- III. Approval of the Minutes from 11/4/25
- IV. Chairperson's Remarks
- V. New Business
 - a. Presentation on the Birth Equity Initiative Progress
 - b. Committee Updates
- VI. Member Updates
- VII. Public Comments
- VIII. Adjournment

Summary

The Illinois Council on Women and Girls met for its first quarterly meeting of 2026 in both the Chicago and Springfield office, as well as virtually. Lieutenant Governor Stratton directed Maria Peterson to conduct a roll call to establish quorum. As quorum was established, the Lieutenant Governor entertained a motion to approve the public agenda, which was moved by Mayor Nancy Rotering, seconded by Sylvia Collins, and approved. Lieutenant Governor Stratton then entertained a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the Q4 meeting on November 4, 2025, which was moved by Mayor Nancy Rotering, seconded by Ines Kutlesa, and approved. As the Lt. Governor needed to depart from the meeting, she appointed Nikki Giancola-Shanks as her designee to conduct the rest of the meeting and to adjourn.

The Council listened to a presentation from Lisa Masinter of the Illinois Department of Public Health, who gave an update on the status of Illinois's Birth Equity Initiative. The Council then heard updates from the Gender-Based Violence, Leadership and Inclusion, Academic and Economic Opportunity, and Health and Healthcare subcommittees. Nikki opened the floor for any updates from the members. The Council heard updates from Director Jane Flanagan, Ines Kutlesa, Jennifer Hebel, and Wendy Pollack. After member updates, Nikki then opened the floor for public comment. Nikki entertained a motion to adjourn, reminding members of the next meeting on Monday, May 11, from 4-5:30 pm. It was moved by Director Flanagan and seconded by Melissa Flores, and the meeting adjourned.