

Senator Iris Y. Martinez



State Senator Iris Y. Martinez was sworn into her first term in the Illinois General Assembly on January 8, 2003, representing the newly created 20th Legislative District. The 20th District includes parts of the Chicago neighborhoods, Albany Park, Avondale, Belmont Cragin, Hermosa, Humboldt Park, Logan Square, and Portage Park.

Senator Martinez made history on the day she was sworn in by becoming the first Hispanic woman in Illinois to be elected to the State Senate. She again made history this year when she became the first Hispanic appointed to Chair the Pensions Committee. She is also Vice-Chair of the Housing and Community Affairs Committee.

In her first year in Springfield, Senator Martinez worked diligently to protect our families, our homes and our communities. She ensured that community agencies such as the Children's Place, an agency that works with children and families affected by HIV and AIDS, and Concordia Avondale Community Center, which provides daycare, after-school programs and a center for seniors, received state funding to continue providing their much needed services to the community. She also sponsored and passed legislation to improve the health and welfare of the neediest residents of her district, focusing mainly on women's health issues. She passed legislation that obligates health insurance companies to provide women with contraceptive coverage.

During the second year of the 93rd General Assembly, Senator Martinez continued her commitment to the people of Illinois with her efforts to pass the Grow Our Own Teachers Program to help bring more teachers to under-served areas and address dangerously low teacher retention rates. In response to a
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local tragedy, Martinez passed 'Louie's Law' (HB 4027), which was signed into law by the Governor to get tougher with hit-and-run drivers. Named for 14-year-old Louie Limberopoulos of Des Plaines, who was struck and killed in a hit-and-run accident while riding his scooter, this new law reduces the reporting time requirement to 30 minutes and increases the penalty for failing to report an accident within that time period.

To help more seniors stay in their homes, Martinez passed SB 2880 to reconfigure the Illinois Elder Care System. This legislation will ensure the development and availability of a comprehensive, affordable and sustainable system of housing, health care and support services for all of Illinois' seniors.

Martinez also targeted Illinois drivers with out-of-state reckless homicide and DUI convictions with the passage HB 4966. The new law ensures that convictions received in other states are included in Illinois driving records and subject to state laws regarding further prosecution of these offences.

Additionally, Martinez passed legislation (HB 5175) giving the Secretary of State additional authority to prevent the fraudulent production of mandatory auto insurance cards. This new law will help guarantee that drivers comply with Illinois' mandatory auto insurance laws which in turn helps lower the cost of auto insurance and makes our roads safer.

To help protect consumers from becoming victims of identity theft, Martinez passed SB 2545 which was signed into law requiring that all insurance cards be issued without a Social Security number.

In order to preserve thousands of Federally Subsidized Housing Units at risk of being lost Martinez created a law (SB 2329) setting a new national standard to help maintain affordable housing for our seniors and low-income families. This new law will guarantee that more of our federal tax dollars come back into Illinois and offer more opportunities for tenants to keep their affordable housing by purchasing their buildings at a fair market value.

In recognition of her accomplishments, in 2004, Senator Martinez was awarded the Hillary Rodham Clinton Leadership Award presented to an outstanding female elected official by the Illinois Democratic Women's organization. This year she received the prestigious Profile in Courage Award from Planned Parenthood for sponsoring the contraceptive bill.

Senator Martinez is the State Central Committeewoman of the 4th Congressional District for the State Democratic Party – a position she has held since 1994 and where she currently serves as Vice-Chairman.