

Ives poses legitimate threat to both Rauner and Democrats

Three months until Illinois voters in both major parties will have actual choices in the contests for governor.

While it would seem that Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner should be an odds-on favorite to be the GOP choice for a second term, the thinking here is "not so fast." While Rauner can and will easily outspend his lone Republican opponent, state Rep. Jeanne Ives, its questionable if his campaign can spend the money wisely.

As an example, his first round of television commercials, while clever and attention-getting, won't help him get votes in Illinois. Having the governors of neighboring states join Rauner in attacking Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan was an attention grabber, but it's not likely that it will have much — if any — impact on voters in the Republican primary.

It is doubtful that many Republicans in Illinois like Madigan, so while the multi-leader and multistate attack on the Illinois speaker may have caused some smiles, it is unlikely that it would win any votes in a Republican primary.

Nor has it helped for Rauner to forcefully proclaim that he is not running the state of Illinois, but that Madigan holds that role. If the ballot included a Madigan vs. Rauner category, voters might find it of interest. But the only voters who can truly express any unhappiness with Madigan live on the Southwest side of Chicago in a large area of aging bungalows, almost all of

which will have a "Re-elect Madigan" or "Re-elect The Speaker" sign in the front yard.

Assuming that Madigan continues to hold his seat and position in the Illinois House, what difference would a second Rauner term bring? The first Rauner term promised hope to Illinois Republicans. But it was largely unrealized hope. Much more likely to have an impact on Illinois voters are the resume and performance of Ives, from Wheaton, Rauner's Republican primary opponent,

Ives, who has served in the Senate since 2013, has a respectable record but what stands out on her resume is the simple fact that college years were spent at the United States Military Academy at West Point, where few women are among the graduating class. The military leadership capabilities she developed included service as platoon leader and headquarters detachment commander in Germany.

Until he decides to retire, Michael Madigan will continue to be the most powerful politician in (or from) Illinois. Even Barack Obama realized that Madigan controlled the strings in Illinois. But Madigan is, of course, part of the "old boys network." Jeanne Ives is not. She has a distinguished career and track record, and her gender



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would give her a reasonable shot against either of two gazillionaires seeking the Democrat nomination for governor if she makes it to the general election.

She would be in a stronger position if there were a third — or fourth — candidate to help siphon votes from Rauner

Early on in the Democrat primary, it seemed as if Chris Kennedy of *the Kennedys*, might have the inside track. The Kennedys have always been favorites of Illinois Democrats and having an actual member of the Kennedy Clan LIVING IN ILLINOIS (!!) and running for governor was almost too much to contemplate. (Boston-born Kennedy is the son of the late U.S. Sen. Robert Kennedy.)

But then along came Jay Pritzker — actually born in Illinois in 1965 — and a graduate of Northwestern University Law School. Largely because of his costly deluge of television commercials, Pritzker seems to have taken a lead, but the Kennedy Clan has the resources to get sufficient television "face time" to catch up and the final two months could be brutal, but fun to watch.

There are five other Democrats seeking the nomination for governor in Illinois and maybe we'll need to mention their names in coming weeks — but it's unlikely.

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