



# Supreme Court of Illinois

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## **ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT INVITES GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATORS TO A SPECIAL EVENING SESSION OF ORAL ARGUMENT**

Chief Justice Rita B. Garman and the Illinois Supreme Court have scheduled a special evening session of oral argument on Tuesday, March 17, and have invited Gov. Bruce Rauner and the entire Illinois legislature to observe the Court in session.

It is uncertain when an evening session was last held in the Illinois Supreme Court Building, but it is believed to have been more than a century ago.

The Court will hear oral arguments in a case involving an amendment passed by the legislature to the Illinois Juvenile Court Act. A portion of the amendment was ruled unconstitutional by a Circuit Court and the case is on direct appeal to the Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Garman explained that the special evening session is an opportunity for members of the General Assembly to observe first-hand the interaction of the functions of the three branches of government and the operation of the checks and balances essential to our system.

"The case involves an amendment that was debated and passed by the legislature, signed by the Governor, applied by the State in an individual case, challenged by a defendant, and declared unconstitutional by the Circuit Court," said Chief Justice Garman. "It affords a window into how our constitutional system operates and the balance among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches."

The case is *People v. Richardson*. It involves a defendant who was 17 years old when he allegedly committed the offenses charged. At the time, the Juvenile Court Act applied only to minors under the age of 17, making him ineligible for juvenile court. After the crimes were committed, but before Richardson was to be tried, the legislature amended the Act to raise the age limit for juvenile felony proceedings to 18. The amendment expressly provides that it is to be applied only to offenses committed on or after its effective date. The Circuit Court of DuPage County ruled that it would violate the constitutional guarantee of equal protection if the defendant were not given the benefit of the amendment.

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"The State will be represented by an attorney from the Office of the Attorney General, and the defendant will be represented by the Office of the State Appellate Defender," Chief Justice Garman noted in her letter to the governor, legislative leaders, and members of the Senate and House. "Thus, you will have the opportunity not only to see the Court at work, but also to observe these valuable public employees performing their vital functions on behalf of the people of the State of Illinois."

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