

Emanuel “Chris” Welch has been a State Representative from the 7th District of Illinois since 2013. He was elected Speaker of the House in January 2021 after serving on several key committees, including chairman of the Executive Committee; and a member of Revenue, Cities and Villages, Counties and Townships, and Higher Education. As chairman of the House Higher Education Committee, he led efforts to pass historic legislation like the four-year map grant award and the AIM High Scholarship. He also served as co-chair of Governor J.B. Pritzker’s Educational Success Transition committee.

As state representative, Welch has focused on improving classroom education, creating jobs, helping the most vulnerable, and streamlining government. Welch has been the Chief Sponsor of several pieces of historic legislation including the law bringing cursive writing back to our schools, the Historic Illinois Trust Act, the Law making Illinois a Welcoming State for immigrants, and the Homeless Bill of Rights. Representative Welch is also a leading voice for adding black and brown people to the boards of publicly held corporations after sponsoring landmark legislation that requires Illinois corporations to annually disclose their board composition.

Welch has been recognized with several significant awards for his legislative record including the prestigious Zeke Giorgi Award from the AFL-CIO and the Friend and Education Award from the Illinois Education Association.

Prior to joining the General Assembly, Welch served 12 years on the Proviso Township High School Board of Education. His last ten years he served as the Board chair. Welch led the Proviso School Board in the creation of the Proviso Math and Science Academy, a school that today is recognized by Chicago Magazine and US News and World Reports. He did this all while balancing the school’s budget for the first time since the early 90s.

Welch is a partner in the local government law firm Ancel Glink. Prior to that, he served as a partner at Sanchez, Daniels and Hoffman, LLP from 2007 to 2018 where he represented local school districts and municipalities. For his work in school, education and civil rights law, Welch has been recognized as a Super Lawyer and one of Chicago’s Leading Lawyers.

Welch is a graduate of Proviso West High School (‘89), Northwestern University (‘93), and The John Marshall Law School (‘97). He is a 2016 inductee into the JMLS Wall of Fame.

Welch is married to ShawnTe and has two children, Tyler and Marley. He believes that “He will always find a way, or make one.”