

534 S. Second Street, Suite 200
Springfield, Illinois 62701-1705
217/544-4014 • Fax: 217/544-0225



999 McClintock Drive, Suite 100
Burr Ridge, Illinois 60527-0844
312/251-1414 • Fax: 312/251-1420

OFFICERS

Michael T. Carrigan, President
Timothy E. Drea, Secretary Treasurer

www.ilafli-cio.org

March 19, 2009

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS: Beth Spencer, Illinois AFL-CIO 217.544.4014
Gail Perky, IFT 217.544-8562
Anders Lindall, AFSCME 312.641-6060
Charlie McBarron, IEA, 217-544-0706
Ray Quintanilla, SEIU 312.233.8896

State Must Face Pension Obligation, Not Cut Workers' Benefits

The Illinois AFL-CIO and the state's public employee unions today criticized Governor Quinn's proposed plan to cut retirement and health care benefits for teachers, university employees, state health care workers, prison guards and front line service employees.

"The Illinois AFL-CIO and our member unions realize our state faces a massive budget deficit," said Michael T. Carrigan, president of the state Labor Federation. "We have long supported ideas to provide much-needed, dependable revenue sources to balance the state budget and provide essential services. Our members recognize the need to share in the sacrifices needed to ensure our communities are safe, the working poor have access to affordable health care and for a first-class education system. However, we believe that pay cuts and reductions to public employee pensions and health care plans to manage this budget deficit disproportionately penalize public employees."

Governor Quinn's budget calls for a two-tiered benefit system for state workers, reducing pension benefits, cutting cost-of-living increases and raising the retirement age for new hires. The plan would also increase employee contributions to the pension system for current employees, cut health care benefits and cut staffing in state government agencies already stretched to the limit.

The Governor also proposes not paying the state's portion of public employee pensions once again.

“AFSCME is opposed to this attempt to balance the budget on the backs of public service workers,” Council 31 Director Henry Bayer said. “There is no reason that those who have devoted their working lives to public service should now be expected to sacrifice more than any other citizen of this state.”

In his speech, Gov. Quinn pointed out the need to fix our “giant underfunded” public pension systems that have been allowed to “spin out of control” for the past thirty years. What he failed to mention is that public employees have been paying their share of the pension contributions faithfully year after year.

“It was the irresponsible actions of past General Assemblies and governors that caused the state pension deficit. Yet, instead of asking the legislature to raise the revenue to address the shortfall, Gov. Quinn would hand every employee a two percent pay cut in the form of an increased contribution to retirement,” said Ken Swanson, president of the Illinois Education Association.

“This budget does nothing to support those men and women considering a career in education,” said Ed Geppert, Jr., president of the Illinois Federation of Teachers. “Drastically cutting benefits and increasing costs for future teachers will make it very difficult for school districts to attract and retain good teachers. Young teachers will be forced to pay more for less.”

Union leaders will be working closely with the Governor, legislation leaders and General Assembly members to help craft a state budget that will benefit all working families.

“The legislative process on this budget is just now beginning,” said Christine Boardman, president of SEIU Local 73. “Let’s hope all of these measures are given a fair hearing in the General Assembly.”

Public employee unions represented today include: the Illinois Federation of Teachers, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Illinois Education Association, the Service Employees International Union and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

The Illinois AFL-CIO represents one million union members from 1,500 affiliated unions across the state.