



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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The Illinois House and Senate will take a week and half break to allow for introduction of new bills. Today is the deadline to draft legislation at the Legislative Reference Bureau. The Senate returns on Tuesday, February 17. The House will return on Wednesday, February 18. Governor Rauner will be laying out his budget plan on February 18, when he is scheduled to address a joint session of the General Assembly.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Rauner Gives State of the State: The Middle Class is “Draggin” the State Down *Billionaire calls for shared sacrifice from all workers, injured, and unemployed*

Governor Rauner addressed a joint session of the House and Senate this week to lay out his agenda for the state of Illinois in his first year in office. His anti-union agenda is for Illinois workers to take reduced wages in state government and the building trades, where he attacked state contracts, prevailing wage, and project labor agreements. In addition, he said that the workers’ compensation system needed to be reformed, expecting injured workers and their families to have less rights and benefits. Workers’ Compensation has been reformed three times over the past ten years.

Governor Rauner envisioned he was speaking to a lower class of people than himself on Wednesday. He felt the need to drop the “g” from the end of his words (i.e. bargaining was bargainin’) approximately 55 times in his speech. This was presumed to be helpful for us middle class folks to understand him better.

Governor Rauner continued to call for local right to work zones, which he believes could be enacted by local governments and communities. He called it a “win-win-win proposal”. The Attorney General of the state of Kentucky found these local right to work zones to violate federal law.

Governor Rauner also called for a prohibition on political contributions from all organizations with a state collective bargaining agreement. Republican State Senator Sam McCann (Carlinville) may have said it best this week, “We run a risk of being on very shaky ground when we say that one citizen’s money is free speech and another citizens money is not free speech.”

Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan issued this statement following Governor Rauner’s speech:

“It’s apparent that Governor Rauner plans to govern like the ultra-wealthy CEO that he is – by taking care of the few at the expense of the many. While he points to the salaries of those cooking the food in the cafeterias, guarding the prisoners and plowing the snow and ice from our roads as the culprits in our state financial woes, he is silent on the hundreds of tax breaks granted to large businesses and low taxation of corporations in Illinois. In fact, decades of piling on these business tax breaks on the local and state level, have exacerbated our revenue problem. That and a deep financial recession created by his friends on Wall Street. We were forced to bail them out and now he’s looking for a bailout on the backs of Illinois’ middle class.

“Instead of seeking solutions that empower all the working families of Illinois to fuel the economy, he proposes to slash the prosperity engine by cutting compensation for injured workers, defunding Unemployment Insurance reserves, demonizing public employees and suppressing wages.

“Since taking office, Gov. Rauner has been on a blame crusade. He cherry picks data and uses right-wing think tanks to support his anti-worker proposals. The bottom line is that according to the Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, Illinois is 13th in the national in average weekly earnings and only two of 21 Right To Work states (Virginia, North Dakota) have higher average weekly earnings. Illinois workers earn more a week than all of our neighboring states. This is what Bruce Rauner wants to turn around.”



Senate Democrats Pass Increase in State's Minimum Wage

No Republican Senators vote in favor of the measure

The Illinois Senate passed SB 11 in a two day duration this week. The vote was 35-18-1. It is nearly identical to HB 4733 that passed the Senate in the 98th General Assembly. SB 11 was sponsored by Senator Kimberly Lightford (D), and will be sponsored by Representative Art Turner (D) in the House.

Under SB 11, Illinois' minimum wage rate, currently at \$8.25-an-hour, would increase to \$9 on July 1, then increase 50 cents each year until 2019. It also provides a tax break for small businesses (50 employees or less) that pay the minimum wage. The legislation pre-empts home rule powers, with the exception of the ordinance passed by the City Council of Chicago.

Governor Rauner has already indicated he would not sign the bill. In his State of the State speech, Rauner offered the billionaire minimum wage special: Increasing the minimum wage \$1.75 over seven years. It drew laughter from the audience in the House chamber.

Central Labor Councils rally to oppose Gov. Rauner's anti-worker agenda



On January 29, Champaign County AFL-CIO hosted a rally to bring workers together to protest Gov. Rauner's agenda against workers.



On February 6th, Decatur Trades & Labor Assembly and Building & Construction Trades Council hosted a similar rally to let Gov. Rauner know that Right to Work Won't Work in Decatur.

QUICK FACT:

Bruce Rauner Keeps Talking about "Forced Unionism"

Under the NLRA, you cannot be required to be a member of a union or pay it any monies as a condition of employment unless the collective bargaining agreement between your employer and your union contains a provision requiring all employees to either join the union or pay union fees.

Polling of the general public, time and time again, has shown that large majorities of people would like to join a union, but find corporate bullying to be too intimidating.

PLEASE JOIN THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO IN CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH



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