



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

MARCH 27, 2015

PUBLISHED FOR LABOR ACTIVISTS BY THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO

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The Illinois General Assembly concluded its business for the week yesterday. The deadline to pass bills out of committee in its originating chamber is today. Both the House and Senate will take a two week break and return on April 14. Upon their return they will turn their focus to floor action and sending bills over to the opposite chamber. Governor Rauner continued traveling the state meeting with groups to peddle his turnaround agenda (portions of which are illegal) and claiming that the unions are the state's worst problem.

Rauner and Republicans Cut State Services and Steal from State Funds

The House and Senate Republicans all voted (except Rep. Sosnowski who was absent) for a FY15 budget fix that relies on a 2.25% cut across several state agencies, including cuts to our children's schools, and raiding special state funds.

Included in the 2.25% cut was the University of Illinois School of Labor and Employment Relations. \$150 million was cut from elementary and secondary schools.

The \$35.7 billion budget that lawmakers passed last spring was not enough money to pay for the state's expenses. HB 318 passed this week in both chambers, by a vote of 32-26 in the Senate, and 69-48 in the House. HB 317 passed also, it will allocate an additional \$1.6 billion for the state

to spend, and frees up \$226 million for subsidized child care, \$117 million to meet payroll at Illinois prisons and \$27 million for mental health service grants. This budget also will aid in sending some furloughed court reporters back to work.

The legislation steals \$350 million from funds for road construction, a move that Governor Rauner and fellow Republicans have opposed in the past. Governor Rauner signed the budget on Thursday evening.

When legislators return in April, they must turn their attention to the FY16 budget. It will not be an easy fight, and many are predicting it will take much of the summer.

Energy Bills Pass with Promise of Further Discussion

A series of bills for utilities and energy companies began moving through the legislative process this week. None of them appear to be in their final form, and will more than likely all be placed into one bill at a later time.

The renewable energy groups passed **SB 1485 (Harmon)** out of Senate Environment and Conservation Committee 7-1-1.

The legislation sets out to strengthen our energy efficiency policies to maximize the potential for cost-effectively saving energy in buildings and plants in every part of the state; updating and extending our renewable portfolio standard to enable solar and wind energy projects to flourish; and directing the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency to develop a market-based approach to compliance with federal carbon rules to ensure that we're allowing market forces to find the most cost-effective emission reduction strategies.

Exelon is seeking changes in the form of **SB 1585 (Hunter)**. It passed Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee

19-0-0. It is a market-based plan that will increase Illinois' renewable energy sources, while maintaining existing low carbon energy sources, such as nuclear power. It is the hope of supporters, that this would make Illinois a national leader with the highest requirement of low carbon energy in the nation and will help keep valuable nuclear power plants in operation.

Common Wealth Edison is seeking their changes in **SB 1879 (Lightford)**, which passed Senate Energy and Public Utilities 17-2-0. This legislation permits a utility to begin implementing its most recently completed Voltage Optimization study. Allows the ICC to exceed the rate cap when it finds the benefits exceeds the costs to the extent it is necessary to achieve the annual 2% energy efficiency goal. The utility is allowed to amortize over a five-year period the full amount of its operating expenses incurred pursuant to an Energy Efficiency plan for each annual period, and any unamortized balance will earn a return equal to the utility's weighted average cost of capital.



GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Other bills seeing action this week:

- **HB 166 (Flowers)** - Creates the Family Leave Insurance Program Act. Requires the Department of Employment Security to establish and administer a Family Leave Insurance Program that provides family leave insurance benefits to eligible employees who take unpaid family leave to care for a newborn child, a newly adopted or newly placed foster child, or a family member with a serious health condition. *Passed House Labor 16-10. Second Reading. Labor Supports.*
- **HB 1402 (Jones)** - Requires that the events of Black History be taught in every public elementary school and high school, provides that a student may not complete the 8th grade or graduate from high school without studying this material. Requires every community college and public university to offer and all students to take a course studying the events of Black History. *Passed House Elementary & Secondary Education: Curriculum 16-8. Second Reading. Labor Supports.*
- **HB 2453 (Kay)** - Provides that arbitration panels hearing security employee, peace officer, firefighter, and paramedic disputes must not take into consideration the ability of a unit of government to raise taxes or impose new taxes when determining the financial ability of that unit of government to pay the costs associated with those employees' wages and other conditions of employment. *Failed in House Labor 6-11. Bill Dead. Labor opposed.*
- **HB 2698 (Franks)** - Amends the Illinois Wage Payment and Collection Act. Provides that an employer that is able to pay wages and who refuses to pay is guilty of a Class 4 felony rather than a misdemeanor. Provides that a subsequent failure to pay within 5, rather than 2, years of a prior conviction is a Class 3, rather than Class 4, felony. *Passed House Labor 14-6-0. Second Reading. Labor Supports.*
- **HB 2791 (Lilly)** - Requires the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to conduct a study regarding credit and background checks conducted by public and private employers. Provides that the purpose of the study is to determine what, if any, impact unpaid child support and credit history information has on an individual's ability to be considered, interviewed, and hired by an employer. *Passed House Judiciary-Civil 11-0. Second Reading. Labor Supports.*
- **HB 3102 (Ammons)** – Changes the appointment and promotions procedures at Civil Service System. Creates broader language for inclusion of more diversity and more people who may apply for a promotion within the civil service classifications. *Passed House Higher Education 15-0. Third Reading. Labor Supports.*
- **HB 3184 (Hurley)** – Increases penalties for aggravated assault of a peace officer, fireman, emergency management worker, or emergency medical technician while they are performing their duties. *Passed House Judiciary-Criminal 15-0. Second Reading. Labor Supports.*
- **HB 3288 (Wehrli)** – Legislation attempted to allow public employers to suspend and dock pay for non-civil service employees. Essentially local bodies could claim employees are “professional” (no overtime pay), while treating them as if they were hourly workers. *Failed in Labor Committee 9-7 (needed 14 votes). Bill Dead. Labor opposed.*
- **HB 3763 (Scherer)** – Provides for state employees to be paid wages and salaries that are overdue to them. Illinois court system has ordered payments to these state employees, and it has yet to be appropriated by the General Assembly. *Passed House Revenue 9-2-0. Second Reading. Labor Supports.*
- **HB 3765 (Scherer)** - Creates the Springfield High Speed Railroad Oversight Act. Provides for the establishment of a diversity program to ensure environmental justice, local involvement, and non-discrimination in all contracts related to the High Speed Rail Project in the City of Springfield and Sangamon County. *Passed House Transportation: Roads 12-6-0. Labor Supports.*
- **SB 817 (T Cullerton)** – Amends Downstate Firefighter Pension Code. Provides that a firefighter shall be considered “on duty” and engaged in an “act of duty” while on any assignment approved by the chief of the fire department, including participation in training activities designed to enhance the skills and abilities of the firefighter, whether within or away from the municipality he or she serves as a firefighter, if the assignment is related to the fire protection service of the municipality. *Passed Senate Licensed Activities & Pensions 7-4. Second Reading. Labor Supports.*

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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- **SB 1238 (Harris)** - Creates the Illinois Family Care Provider Act. Provides that an employer must provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid family medical leave to an employee during any 12-month period for one or more of these purposes: the birth or adoption of a grandchild in order for the employee to care for such grandchild; because of the placement of a grandchild with the employee for adoption or foster care; or in order for the employee to care for a grandchild if such grandchild has a serious health condition or the employee to care for a grandparent if such grandparent has a serious health condition. *Passed Senate Executive 11-0-3. Second Reading. Labor Supports.*
- **SB 1683 (T Cullerton)** - Amends the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Provides that the Director of Labor shall adopt rules necessary to implement the Act, including, but not limited to, rules dealing with the inspection of an employer's establishment. Authorizes the Director to require the attendance and testimony of witnesses and the production of evidence under oath during inspections and investigations. *Passed Senate Labor 10-0. Second Reading. No position.*

UAW Successful in Passage of Buy American Legislation

UAW Region 4 was successful in passage of HB 3438 (Smiddy) out of House Labor Committee this week. It passed committee 14-6-0. The bill requires that all motor vehicles purchased or leased for one year or more by a State agency shall be made in the United States or Canada (defined as a VIN # that begins with 1,2,4 or 5). The bill will now go the House floor, where it passed with 73 yes votes last year.

Derailing Fast Track: Illinois Labor Focuses on Congressman Rush

The Senate Finance Committee hopes to advance Trade Promotion Authority, or "fast track", in April. Labor and allies in Illinois have been mobilizing to defeat this legislation that will pave the way to more ill-conceived trade deals like NAFTA. In fact, on the horizon could be one of the worst deals for American workers in our history, as the Obama Administration is secretly negotiating the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP).

TPP is one of the largest trade deals in US history and it's negotiations and components are secret. Fast track authority means that the deal will get an up or down vote in Congress and our elected representatives cannot attempt to amend the deal and make it better for American workers.

While labor union members and community allies have met with and called the Illinois congressional delegation, the focus has turned to Congressman Bobby Rush (D-1), who represents parts of Chicago, south Cook suburbs and parts of northern Will County. Rep. Rush has been a longtime friend of labor, as evidenced by his 98 percent lifetime voting record. But fast track and TPP are critical issues to all of labor and he has expressed that he is undecided.

Congressman Rush's contact information:

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700 E. 79th Street
Chicago, IL 60619
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2268 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington DC 20515
(202) 225-4372

US House vote on NLRB election rule

Last week, the U.S. House voted to kill the National Labor Relations Board's NLRB new election by a vote of 232-186. The rule would have alleviated the delays, inefficiencies, abuse of process and unnecessary litigation that plague the current system for workers who want to vote on whether to have a union. The rule was scheduled to take effect on April 14.

The Resolution of Disapproval was supported by every Republican, except Representatives Frank LoBiondo (NJ), Chris Smith (NJ), and Peter King (NY), who voted with every Democrat to uphold the NLRB's recent action. President Obama has promised to veto the legislation. The rule was issued by the NLRB last December to modernize the Board's election procedure and reduce unnecessary litigation and delay in the election process.

Visit the following link to see how your representatives voted: <http://go.aflcio.org/HouseNLRBrule>

VOTE

Tuesday, April 7

EARLY VOTE: TODAY THRU 4/6/15

SAVE THE DATE



7th Annual
**Illinois AFL-CIO
 COPE Golf Outing**

The Rail Golf Course - 1400 S. Club
 House Drive, Springfield, IL

Monday, June 8, 2015

1 PM Shotgun Start / 6 PM Dinner

\$200 per player / \$3,000 Gold Sponsor / \$2,000 Silver / \$250 Hole

A copy of our report filed with the State Board of Elections is (or will be) available on the Board's official website (www.elections.state.il.us) or for purchase from the State Board of Elections, Springfield, IL