



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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The Illinois General Assembly completed their business on Thursday. Both chambers will now take a twelve day break for the primary election (March 18). They will return on Wednesday, March 19. Both chambers will have two legislative weeks to consider bills in committee, and must pass them out by March 28.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Illinois AFL-CIO Testifies For Higher State Minimum Wage at Labor Hearing

The Illinois House Labor Committee, chaired by Jay Hoffman (D – Collinsville), held a subject matter hearing on increasing the state’s minimum wage. Currently the wage is set at \$8.25 an hour, with the last increase in the wage occurring in 2010. The last time the General Assembly passed legislation to increase the state’s minimum wage was in 2006. The current proposal in the House is HB 3718 (Turner). It would increase the minimum wage to \$9.25 an hour in 2014, \$10 an hour in 2015, and \$10.65 an hour in 2016.

Tim Drea, IL AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer, testified in support of the increase. He stated that raising the minimum wage would be all positive, and no negative. “If we look at the first time the state minimum wage was increased – from July 2004 to 2007 – the state economy added 305,000 jobs, so a minimum wage increase is not a job killer.”

The House Labor Committee will hear testimony the week of March 19 from those groups who wish to deny workers a raise.

OTHER ACTIONS TAKEN BY HOUSE & SENATE

HB 3659 (Franks) - Amends the Metropolitan Transit Authority Act. Prohibits employees and members of the Chicago Transit Board from holding any other office or employment under the Federal, State or any County or any municipal government, or any other unit of local government. Makes corresponding changes in the Regional Transportation Authority Act that apply to members serving on the Regional Transportation Authority Board and the Commuter Rail Board. *Passed House Mass Transit 17-0. Second Reading.*

HB 3672 (Riley/Hutchinson) - Requires open meetings of the Chicago Transit Board, the Regional Transporta
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Right-Wing Policy Institute - Wrong Again

The Illinois Policy Institute (IPI) is an anti-union, right wing front group in Springfield that disguises itself as a “policy think-tank” to provide unbiased facts to their perceived problems in the State of Illinois. For the past several years they have published bogus “studies” on moving public employees into 401k plans and implementing Right to Work in Illinois. IPI “studies” are regularly used by the most conservative members of the General Assembly to rationalize their radical agenda against working families.

Their latest “study” went after local municipal pension funds. The IPI used publically available data from Springfield and 113 other Illinois cites to score and rank the effect local pension funds have on taxpayers. The information the IPI presented as facts was so outlandish that the Springfield Journal Register printed an editorial this week criticizing the IPI along with the institute’s data and conclusions. They ended their editorial by warning “And anyone who chooses to consider on the institute’s data and conclusions would be advised to do their own homework first.”

Pat Devaney, President of the Associated Fire Fighters of Illinois (AFFI) followed up with a letter to the editor and summed up it best by writing, “Firefighters, police officers and elected officials from local governments all agree Illinois is working to balance the needs of taxpayers with the compensation and retirement security of first responders. The Illinois Policy Institute, in its crusade to scare citizens and bend the truth, serves no positive benefit to that effort.”



General Assembly Action - from page 1

tion Authority Board, the Commuter Rail Board, and the Suburban Bus Board to be broadcast to the public and maintained in real-time on the Board's web site using a high-speed Internet connection. *Passed House 112-0. To Senate.*

HB 3754 (Chapa LaVia) - The State Charter School Commission is abolished and the terms of all members end. Provides that all of the powers, duties, assets, liabilities, contracts, property, records, and pending business of the Commission are transferred to the State Board of Education. *Passed House Elementary & Secondary Ed 10-3. Second Reading. Support.*

HB 4581 (Fortner) - Provides that an employer may not require an employee to use earned vacation time or any form of paid leave time to serve as an election judge. *Passed House Executive 10-0. Third Reading.*

HB 5485 (Mayfield) – Fire fighters' Initiative. Clarifies existing law regarding collective bargaining for Fire Fighters. The bill, specifically, adds manning as mandatory subject of bargaining that may be considered by an arbitrator if the parties fail to reach an agreement. *Passed Senate Labor 13-5. Second Reading. Support.*

HB 5563 (K Burke) - Amends the Equal Pay Act of 2003. Provides that the Department of Labor may refer for investigation a complaint alleging a violation of the Act to the Department of Human Rights if the complaint also alleges a violation of the Illinois Human Rights Act over which the Department of Human Rights has jurisdiction. *Passed House Labor 16-0. Second Reading.*

HB 5632 (K Burke) – Amends the Cemetery Oversight Act. Provides that a cemetery authority and a cemetery authority claiming a partial exemption shall provide access to the cemetery every day of the year from sunrise to sunset each day. *Passed House State Government 14-6. Monitoring.*

HB 5936 (Mautino) - Creates the Asbestos Occupations Licensure Act. This is an initiative of the Illinois Chamber and Associated Builders & Contractors. Provides that persons licensed to perform asbestos abatement-related activities under the Asbestos Abatement Act or the Commercial and Public Building Asbestos Abatement Act shall be licensed by the Department of Public Health. Provides that after the effective date of this Act, rule making for the Asbestos Abatement Act or the Commercial and Public Building Asbestos Abatement Act shall be done by the Pollution Control Board.

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Senate Republican Leader Pitches Workers Comp Cuts

Minority
Senate
Republican
Leader

Christine
Radogno
testified

before the Senate Labor Committee briefly this week that workers' compensation costs were hurting businesses in Illinois.

“Workers should not be asked to sacrifice every time there is a perceived problem in this state.”

IL AFL-CIO President Michael T. Carrigan

She highlighted “causation” as an issue that should be addressed by the General Assembly. Causation would place the burden on the employee to prove their injury occurred at the workplace. The business community is also speaking to Senate members about workers' compensation costs.

All of the workers' compensation “crisis” rhetoric is wholly unsupported by the statistical evidence. Since the 2011 “reforms”, the National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI – an insurance industry rate making agency which provides workers' compensation information) has recommended a 14 percent rate reduction for Illinois insurance premiums. This reduction would result in a \$315 million per year savings in insurance premiums for Illinois' employers. Tellingly, insurance companies have refused to reduce their premiums in response to their own industry recommendation.

“Labor must begin speaking with legislators about workers' compensation,” Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael T. Carrigan responded. “It is not workers' fault, but the insurance industry. “If employers' costs are not decreasing, workers should not be asked to sacrifice every time there is a perceived problem in this state.”



General Assembly - Continued from page 2

Passed Business & Occupational Licenses 9-0. Second Reading. Oppose.

HB 6010 (Madigan) - Appropriates \$100,000,000 from the Capital Development Fund to the Capital Development Board for the construction of a presidential library and museum dedicated to the legacy of President Barack Obama. *Introduced in the House.*

HJR 80 (Bradley/Hutchinson) - States that both chambers believe there will be just less than \$34.5 billion in revenue available to spend in the fiscal year (FY15) that starts July 1. *Passed Senate 38-17. Passed both chambers.*

SB 2612 (Kotowski/Currie) - It will provide for transfers from certain special funds of the State to the Tax Compliance and Administration Fund. Provides that those moneys shall be used, subject to appropriation, to fund additional auditors and compliance personnel at the Department of Revenue. *Passed Senate today 35-19. To House. Support.*

SB 2640 (Bush/Madigan) - Provides that the strategic business development plan prepared by the Illinois Business Development Council shall include: (i) an assessment of the economic development practices of states that border Illinois and (ii) recommendations for best practices with respect to economic development for counties in Illinois that border at least one other state. *Passed Senate 52-0-1. Referred to House Rules. Monitoring.*

SB 2648 (Althoff/Franks) - Amends the Prevailing Wage Act. Provides that the Department of Labor shall administer the Act and adopt rules to effectuate the purposes of the Act. *Passed Senate 48-0. To House. Monitoring.*

SB 2658 (Connelly) - The introduced bill would have allowed municipalities to use Motor Fuel Tax (MFT) allocations for the treatment of trees infected with dutch elm disease or emerald ash borer or for their removal from any parcel of public or private property within the municipality. Amendment #2 was filed so that motor fuel tax allocations could not be used on private property projects, and limiting the bill to trees affected by the emerald ash borer. MFT funds are collected by adding 19 cents per gallon of fuel used in motor vehicles upon public highways. The MFT uses allowable are specified in statute and all uses of MFT are related to highway construction, maintenance or highway related activities. *Passed Senate Agriculture 8-0. Third*

Reading. Moving opposed.

SB 2791 (Hutchinson) - Provides that members of railroad police forces may issue administrative citations in accordance with the provisions of local law. *Passed Senate 54-1. To House. Monitoring.*

SB 2998 (Martinez) - Provides that an applicant for licensure to practice as an advanced practice nurse shall have successfully completed requirements to practice as, and holds and maintains (rather than only holds) a current, national certification as a nurse midwife, clinical nurse specialist, nurse practitioner, or certified registered nurse anesthetist from the appropriate national certifying body as determined by rule of the DFPR. *Passed Senate 56-0. To House. Monitoring.*

SB 3023 (Mulroe) – Amends the Mechanics Lien Act to prevent the elimination of lien rights through the use of subordinations clauses. Banks have the ability to protect themselves prior to lending and during the course of the project. Contractors should have equal protection. This legislation will ensure contractors have equal protection. *Passed Senate Judiciary 8-2-1. Second Reading. Support.*

SB 3038 (Raoul) – AFL-CIO initiative - Amends the Workplace Violence Prevention Act. Provides that the Act does not apply to the monitoring of compliance with certain worker safety laws, lawful picketing, or the exercise of the right of free speech or assembly that is otherwise lawful. *Passed Senate Labor 12-4. Second Reading. Support.*

SB 3071 (Cunningham/K Burke) - Provides that libraries are not required to accept the lowest contract bid for certain projects when the cost is in excess of \$20,000 if the bid does not meet the library's established specifications, terms of delivery, quality, and serviceability requirements. Sets forth the types of contracts that are not subject to competitive bidding. *Passed Senate 56-0. To House.*

AM 342 – Jennifer Lee was confirmed 53-0-2 to the Mid-Illinois Medical District Commission.

AM 365 – Diana Alvarez was confirmed 53-0-2 to (business position) the Workers' Compensation Medical Fee Advisory Board.

AM 366 – David Menchetti was confirmed 53-0-2 to (labor position) of the Work Comp Medical Fee Advisory Board.