



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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The Illinois General Assembly returned to Springfield for the fall veto session this week. They were scheduled to remain in session for three days; however, both chambers canceled session on Thursday. Rallies were held by both sides of the marriage equality issue. A bill was introduced to increase the state's minimum wage, HB 3718, by Representative Turner. The General Assembly will now take a one week break, and then return on Tuesday, November 5. The Illinois AFL-CIO and its affiliates continue to monitor any proposed changes to the public pension system. There was no movement on pensions in the first week of veto session. We also continue to lobby against special tax breaks for wealthy corporations to remain in Illinois, such as Archer Daniels Midland. We believe strongly that the state cannot sacrifice the needs of the many, for the benefit of the few.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

This Week in Veto Session

School Waivers

The Illinois Federation of Teachers successfully stopped a physical education waiver submitted by O'Fallon CCSD 90. The district's request was to excuse students in kindergarten through grade 5 from the daily physical education requirement. In its place, students will participate in 15-20 minutes of daily physical activity, designed by a certified physical education teacher (but not conducted by a physical education teacher). IFT had many concerns including the elimination of separate physical education classes, the expectation that teachers provide physical education as part of their daily classroom activities, and the fact that contrary to the law, that economic factors were the primary rationale for the district in seeking the waiver. **HJR 31 (Chapa LaVia/Delgado) was adopted by both houses.**

In other legislation this week:

- SB 1787, amendment 1 - The Teamsters were successful in passing an amendment out of House State Government Committee by a vote of 16-4. The bill would allow the state Comptroller to suspend or revoke a license to sell pre-paid funeral and burial plans by funeral directors that engage in a lockout. The amendment was supported by the Comptroller's office, who oversees funeral director licenses.
- AM 97 – Sharina Maye confirmed as a member of the Illinois Commerce Commission. Confirmed by the Senate 50-6-0.
- AM 75 – Roger Poole (IAM) confirmed as a member of the Illinois Finance Authority. Confirmed by the Senate 49-0-6.
- AM 158 – Albert Washington confirmed as a member of the Illinois Labor Relations Board. Confirmed by the Senate 50-5-0.
- AM 159 – Robert M. Gierut confirmed as a member of the Illinois Labor Relations Board. Confirmed by the Senate 51-4-0.
- AM 166 – Ruth White to be a Commissioner of the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission. Confirmed by Senate 50-5-0.
- AM 167 – Thomas Tyrrell to be a Commissioner of the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission. Confirmed by the Senate 51-5-0.
- AM 168 – Mario Basurto to be a Commissioner of the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission. Confirmed by the Senate 49-6-0.
- AM 208 – Tim Drea (IL AFL-CIO) to the Employment Security Advisory Board. Confirmed by the Senate 49-0-6.
- AM 210 – Tony Garcia (UAW) to the Employment Security Advisory Board. Confirmed by the Senate 49-0-6.
- AM 211 - Hanah Jubeh to be a member of the Employment Security Advisory Board. Confirmed 49-0-6.
- AM 214 – Bill Potts, Jr (SEIU) to the Employment Security Advisory Board. Confirmed by the Senate 49-0-6.
- AM 488 – Cinda Klickna (IEA) was confirmed to the Education funding Advisory Board by a vote of 50-1 in full senate.
- AM 489 – Dan Montgomery (IFT) was confirmed to the Education Funding Advisory Board by the full Senate 50-1.



Statewide Building & Construction Trades and IBEW Conference Meet in Springfield



The Illinois Statewide Building Trades met in Springfield on Wednesday this week. Members of the building trades had an opportunity to hear from Senate President John Cullerton and Ann Callis who is running for Congress in the 13th Congressional District. The building trades leaders who attended were given time to go speak with their House and Senate members on issues important to them. Illinois AFL-CIO endorsed Mike Frerichs, who is running Treasurer, stopped by to greet building trades leaders. Senator Kwame Raoul and Representative Hoffman also stopped by the meeting.

The Statewide IBEW conference was held in Springfield this week as well. Many of the legislative leaders stopped by to greet the IBEW leaders at the Hilton Hotel. Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan (IBEW #146) spoke on Tuesday, and rallied the members to speak with their legislators about key issues in the veto session.



Legislative Hearings: School of Labor and Employment Relations

Legislative Hearings were held in Chicago (October 17) and Springfield (October 23) to discuss the School of Labor and Employment Relations at the University of Illinois.

The University has indicated that they would like to merge the independent school with their Business or Liberal Arts school. Labor is united in being opposed to this effort expressing concerns that the university will fail to recognize the importance of the School's mission.

The Illinois AFL-CIO led the panel of different officials giving testimony at both hearings. The true power was found in the number of organizations and individuals who traveled many miles to speak with one voice to object to the University unilaterally forcing the School of Labor to merge.

The University of Illinois' School of Labor and Employment Relations is known nationwide for being in the top three for its program of excellence.

The School was created in 1946 with the purpose of providing a dedicated space for teaching and academic research impacting the state's employers, working families and policy makers.

Reorganizing the School into any other campus unit would threaten the long-term continuation of an independent intellectual domain of work and employment relations. Unions are urging the university to leave the School in its current form to continue the tradition of exceptional service to the people of Illinois.

Thousands Rally for Marriage Equality

Thousands of marriage equality advocates and allies braved the cold rain to rally outside the Capitol on October 22, the first day of the fall veto session. The rally was organized by Illinois Unites for Marriage and was touted as the largest LGBT rights event ever staged in Springfield.

Their efforts hoped to secure final passage of the Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act (SB-10) – sponsored by Greg Harris (D-Chicago) - which cleared the Illinois Senate on February 14 but has stalled in the House.

If passed by the House, Governor Quinn's signature would make Illinois the 15th state to provide equal access to the freedom to marry.

Many elected officials and community organizations spoke at the event including Senator Dick Durbin (D-Chicago), Gov. Pat Quinn (D), Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon (D), Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan (D), Secretary of State Jesse White (D) and Comptroller Judy Barr Topinka (R).

Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan also addressed the crowd letting them know that issues of equality and fairness have always been the concern of organized labor and that we stand in solidarity to get SB-10 passed.

Organizers and advocates remain optimistic that the bill will be called during the second week of veto session.



House Got the Message: Job-Creating Infrastructure Legislation Passes with Bipartisan Support

WASHINGTON, DC—Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) President Edward Wytkind issues this statement on passage of H.R.3080, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA), by a vote of 417-3:

“The House of Representatives took a big step forward last night when it passed WRRDA by more than 400 votes, bringing us closer to enacting the first water resources jobs bill since 2007.

“The margin by which this bill passed shows that with strong leadership and a willingness to stare down those incapable of ever admitting there is a role for strategic public investments, it is possible to pass bipartisan jobs-creating transportation legislation. The benefits to America's competitiveness and economy from improvements to our ports, harbors and waterways overcame intense opposition from extremist organizations that through their opposition to WRRDA were essentially making the case for America's retreat from the global economy. Fortunately they lost and our economy won.

“We hope this bipartisan approach to port and maritime funding reforms will carry forward to other important transportation measures including the broken and unreliable way we invest in aviation, public transit and highways, and Amtrak.

“We thank House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA), Ranking Member Nick Rahall (D-WV) and subcommittee leaders for driving this jobs bill home. We look forward to working with them to reconcile House-Senate differences in WRRDA so that a final bill can get to the President's desk without delay and we can get to work expanding and modernizing our nation's aging port and maritime infrastructure.”