



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

DECEMBER 5, 2014

**PUBLISHED FOR LABOR ACTIVISTS BY THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO**

**MICHAEL T. CARRIGAN**, PRESIDENT

**TIMOTHY E. DREA**, SECRETARY TREASURER

**JASON KELLER**, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

*The Illinois General Assembly wrapped up its business for the 98th General Assembly this week. The House is scheduled to return January 14, 2015 for the inaugural ceremonies of the 99th General Assembly. The Senate did schedule a possible session day for the 98th General Assembly on January 13, 2015 – but that date is subject to change. The Constitutional Office Holders will be sworn in on Monday, January 12th. Governor-Elect Rauner will be able to give his assessment of Illinois at the State of the State Speech to a joint session of the General Assembly on February 4, 2015. Governor-Elect Rauner will then be able to lay all of his budget ideas on the table to a joint session of the General Assembly in the Budget Address on February 18, 2015. Illinois' personal and corporate income tax will by statute be reduced on January 1, 2015.*

## **Income Disparity on Display in Capitol this Week**

*Chicago City Council Increases City Wage, Wealthy Win Again in State Capitol*

While no final action was taken on raising the state's minimum wage this week, much action was happening behind the scenes. Most groups were focusing their attention on "pre-emption language" which would prohibit local bodies from increasing their minimum wage above the state's threshold. While the General Assembly, low wage worker advocates, and big wealthy business lobbyists continued to press their case – the Chicago city council passed an ordinance that would set a minimum wage target of \$13 an hour, to be reached by the middle of 2019. The city's wage will increase to \$10 an hour in July 2015, \$10.50 in July 2016; \$11 in July 2017; \$12 in July 2018; and finally \$13 in July 2019. The vote in the Chicago City Council was 44-5.

The Illinois Senate did pass HB 4733, which would have raised the state's minimum wage to \$11 by 2019. It also contained tax credits for businesses with less than fifty employees. It passed the Senate 39-18-1. However, by the time the Senate passed it, Speaker Madigan had adjourned the Illinois House sine die (latin for without day) meaning the 98th General Assembly House members will not reconvene, unless called into special session by a proclamation from the Governor.

The Illinois AFL-CIO appreciates all of the hard work by its affiliates to pass the non-binding referendum in this year's election. It was approved by nearly 67% of voters in the state. It was a disappointment that many legislators appeared to thwart the will of the people, to side with big wealthy business. We further appreciate the efforts by everyone that spent time working on this issue. It is not surprising that the "1%" won again in the capitol, we will continue to raise our voice and fight!

### **Rock Island Clean Line Moves Forward**

On Tuesday before the Thanksgiving holiday, the Illinois Commerce Commission granted Rock Island Clean Line a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to construct and operate the Illinois portion of the Rock Island Clean Line. Clean Line is the proposed electric transmission line that will dramatically expand wind energy development and deliver it to communities that need more low-cost clean energy.

Clean Line filed their franchise petition with the Iowa Utilities Board on Nov. 6th.

In Illinois, the project will make cost-effective clean energy available for consumers, creating construction jobs and a cleaner, healthier environment. In Iowa, the Rock Island Clean Line will help the state lead the nation in producing and exporting wind energy, just as the state exports corn, bean, hogs, and other agricultural products today. In both states, we'll provide millions of dollars of property tax-related payments for schools, fire departments, and other local governments.

### **Secure Choice Savings Bill Passes**

The General Assembly approved the Illinois Secure Choice Savings Program bill sponsored by Senator Biss and Leader Currie (SB 2758). This legislation will offer working families without employer sponsored retirement accounts, including many immigrant families, IRA-like accounts. These accounts will enable working families to save their earnings, building an asset base that will help ensure their future financial stability. This bill awaits the governor's consideration.



## Significant Election Code Changes Made

Both chambers acted quickly in the final week of Veto Session to pass significant changes to how elections will be run in the future. SB 172 (Harmon/Madigan) passed the House 70-44 and the Senate 40-17. It will now be sent to Governor Quinn for his consideration. Among the significant changes made were:

- Page 142, line 22: A voter may cast a provisional ballot if they attempted to register to vote on Election Day, but failed to provide necessary documentation. Vote will count if voter can provide documentation to register to authority within seven days of Election Day.
- On page 44, line 12 – grace period registration and voting can take place up to and including Election Day at a permanent polling place, any early voting site beginning 15 days prior to election, or at a polling place.
- Early voting shall be open beginning 40 days before general primary, consolidated primary, consolidated, or general election and extends to the end of the day before Election Day.
- On page 207: Beginning the 15th day before an election through the end of election day during the hours of 8:30am to 4:30pm or 9am to 5pm on weekdays AND beginning 8 days before election day, a permanent polling place for early voting must remain open during the hours of 8:30am to 7pm or 9am to 7pm; 9am to 12pm on Saturdays, and 10am to 4pm (was 12-3) on Sundays.
- On page 32, line 22 - Requires the State Board of Elections to become a member of the Pew Research Center's Election Registration Information Center by June 1, 2016 for the purpose of maintaining a statewide voter registration database.
- The state board of elections shall enter into an agreement to permit the Secretary of State to provide the state board of elections with any information required for compliance with Election Registration Information Center.

## Ameren Two-Year Extension Passes

The Senate voted to pass HB 3975 (Phelps/Cullerton) by a vote of 40-4-2. The Illinois AFL-CIO supported the bill, and President Michael Carrigan testified in committee this week. The bill extends the sunset date (from December 31, 2017 to December 31, 2019) of the smart grid law that permits them to continue infrastructure improvements to bring electricity to consumers in Illinois. A motion was filed by Senate President Cullerton to reconsider his vote on the bill, effectively blocking transmittal of the bill to Governor Quinn until further discussion can take place.

## Governor Quinn appoints Ron Rascia Acting Chairman

Governor Quinn has appointed Ronald A. Rascia as Acting Chairman of the Workers' Compensation Commission. Chairman Rascia first joined the Commission in 2011 as General Counsel, and later added the duties of the Secretary of the Commission. Assistant Secretary Brendan O'Rourke will serve as Acting Secretary.

Chairman Rascia worked for the Illinois Attorney General for nine years as a supervising attorney in the General Law Bureau, where he defended State agencies in state and federal courts. As an attorney in the private sector, he served as General Counsel to Northwestern Golf Company and Platinum Financial Group.

Chairman Rascia earned a BA in Economics from DePaul, and both a JD and LLM in Intellectual Property from John Marshall Law School.

Former Chairman Michael Latz resigned on November 30th. We thank him for his efforts and wish him well.

## Illinois Trial Lawyers Association Passes Worker Protection Bill

SB 2221 (Raoul/Nekritz) passed both chambers this week. The bill amends the Code of Civil Procedure by removing the 10-year statute of limitation for causes of action related to exposure to asbestos. It ensures that a worker who sustains a latent injury or illness from asbestos due to the negligence of another would no longer be denied justice.

## *Other bills this week:*

### **HB 1022 (Walsh/Sandoval)**

#### **Creates the Task Force on Sustainable Transportation Funding Act.**

Creates the Task Force on Sustainable Transportation Funding. Sets forth the membership of the Task Force and provides that the Task Force shall serve without compensation and shall meet within 60 days after the effective date of the Act. Provides that the Task force shall: (1) analyze the current trends between the infrastructure needs of Illinois and the revenue received from federal and State gas taxes and the level of highway and road investment that would reduce congestion, keep Illinois' economy competitive, and keep drivers safe; (2) research and recommend possible alterations and alternatives for how to modernize the State of Illinois' system of financing maintenance, improvements, and expansion of its public infrastructure systems, including, but not limited to, best practices in other states, user-based alternatives, or other equitable and sustainable methods for funding transportation; (3) make recommendations to the Department of Transportation regarding how to implement possible alterations or alternatives; and (4) submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by June 1, 2015. Repeals the Act on January 1, 2016. Passed Senate 56-0, Passed House 115-0. Passed both chambers.

### **SB 2774 (Munoz/Zalewski)**

#### **Creates the Transportation Network Providers Act.**

Requires transportation network companies and participating drivers to maintain transportation network company insurance. Provides for driver requirements. Requires transportation network companies to adopt a non-discrimination policy towards passengers. Provides for both safety and operational requirements. Amends the Ridesharing Arrangements Act to make conformity changes. Passed House 105-7-2, Passed Senate 52-2-1. Passed both chambers.

Holiday Greetings from the Illinois AFL-CIO