



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Michael T. Carrigan, President
Timothy E. Drea, Secretary Treasurer

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On These And Other Legislative Issues Important To Working People**

Last week both the House and Senate worked long hours to meet the 3rd Reading deadline for bills to be passed out of the chamber of introduction. In addition, lawmakers passed several components of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (Obama economic stimulus package) by appropriating stimulus funds to several agencies and restored funding vetoed by former Governor Blagojevich last fall.

Lawmakers are currently on the two week Spring Break and will return to Springfield on Tuesday, April 21, 2009. It is expected that once returning from the Spring Break, lawmakers will begin to work in earnest on the FY 2010 budget and ethics reform.

STATE NEWS

HB 210 – Supplemental Appropriation / Roads and Bridges Repair

Speaker Madigan (D – Chicago)/Sen. Trotter (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT:

The General Assembly appropriated funding from the federal economic stimulus package, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and restored budget cuts enacted last year by former Governor Blagojevich. State agencies will administer distribution of federal funds as follows:.

Transportation

- Authorizes \$2 billion in road bonds and \$1 billion in transit bonds for road and bridge projects, mass transit infrastructure and rolling stock;
- Appropriates \$450 million to begin shovel-ready projects in IDOT's Multi-Year Program this Spring;
- Appropriates \$150 million to IDOT to be used for emergency repair of state and local roads and bridges;
- Appropriates \$900 million for highway and bridge projects in the current IDOT multi-year plan;
- Dedications \$40 million for Transit projects in Northeast Illinois and Downstate;
- Provides \$500 million for high speed rail projects
- Dedicates \$300 million for CREATE
- Provides \$285 million for improvements to passenger rail and \$6 million for freight rail;
- Appropriates \$1.7 million for site preparation at Chicago/Rockford Airport

Human Services

- \$1.7 billion to pay outstanding Medicaid bills and arrive at a 30 day payment cycle;
- \$74 million for child care services;
- \$25 million for the USDA women, infants and children (WIC) nutritional food program;.
- \$3 million to support the AmeriCorps programs community service activities; and
- \$9.1 million for immunizations for the Vaccine for Children Program.

Education, Employment and Economic Development

- Restores nearly \$4 million for Court Reporters
- Restores \$1 million for personnel services at the Auditor General
- Reopens State Historic Sites
- Replaces \$804 million of GRF from State Board of Education programs and with equal amounts from the federal stimulus package.
- Provides nearly \$5 million in enhanced funds for IDES administration to serve unemployed workers;
- Appropriates \$160 million for Workplace Investment Act (WIA) grants;
- Includes \$85 for the Bureau of Technology and Industrial Competitiveness at DCEO for grants to enhance wireless and broadband services, as well as rural utilities service
- \$82 million for the Bureau of Community Development at DCEO.
- \$608 million for federal stimulus associated with the State Energy Program that is administered through the Bureau of Energy and Recycling at DCEO.
- \$125 million for low-income home owners to enroll in the the home weatherization program.

4/3/09 – PA 96-0004



HB 650 – Firefighter Continuation Privilege

Rep. Lang (D – Skokie)

SUPPORT

Changes the definition of “retirement of disability period” to include the period when a disabled firefighter, if not enrolled in the municipal group insurance plan at the time of disability, may enroll during an open enrollment period but not after the firefighter becomes eligible for federal Medicare coverage.

4/3/09 – Passed the House 99-15-1. 1st Reading in Senate.

HB 2376 - State Facility Closure / SB 327 - State Facility Closure

Rep. Gordon (D-Coal City)

Sen. Crotty (D - Oak Forest)/Rep. Riley (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

If appropriations have been made for the current fiscal year for the operation of a State facility for the entire fiscal year that facility cannot be closed or have its funding or services reduced.

4/2/09 – Passed Senate 42-13-3. 1st Reading in House.

4/3/09 – Passed House 88-29-0.

HB 2445 - Omnibus Collective Bargaining Act

Rep. Chapa LaVia (D - Aurora)

Sen. Sullivan (D – Rushville)

SUPPORT

Amends the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act and the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act. Provides that public employees forming a union may sign either a union authorization card OR a majority interest petition. Establishes minimum staffing levels at each of the boards and requires each board to return decisions on certification of an union within 120 days.

4/3/09 – Passed House 91-25-0. 1st Reading in Senate.

HB 3634 – Equal Pay Act Record Keeping

Rep. Currie (D – Chicago)/Sen. Lightford (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Provides that an employee or former employee may file a complaint with the Department of Labor alleging a violation of the Equal Pay/Act within one year from the date of the underpayment. Establishes that the “date of underpayment” means each time wages are underpaid. Requires that an employer subject to the Act to shall preserve specified records for not less than 5 (rather than 3) years.

3/31/09 – Passed House 89-26-0. 1st Reading in Senate.

HB 3878 – Health Facility Closure Statement

Rep. Bradley (D – Marion)/Sen. Forby (D– Benton)

SUPPORT

Requires that a health care facility must provide a written pre-closing statement to the Department of Public Health no less than 90 days before permanently closing its facility.

4/1/09 – Passed House 117-0-0. First Reading in Senate.

HB 4251 – Public Utility Staffing Levels

Rep. Phelps (D–Harrisburg)/Sen. Clayborne Jr. (D–Bellevue)

SUPPORT

Amends the Public Utilities Act. Provides that the staff

of the Illinois Commerce Commission shall develop benchmarks for employee staffing levels for each classification and employee training for each classification, subject to specified provisions, within one year after becoming law.

4/2/09 – Passed House 117-0-0. First Reading in Senate.

SB 43 – Prevailing Wage in TIF/Enterprise Zones

Sen. Clayborne (D – East St. Louis)

Rep. Fritchey (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Requires the payment of Prevailing Wage to workers on construction projects in Illinois TIF/Enterprise Zones.

4/1/09 – Passed Senate 34-21. 1st Reading in the House.

SB 223 – Prevailing Wage on Bond Projects

Sen. Forby (D – Benton)

Rep. Miller (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Provides that "public works" includes all projects financed in whole or in part with bonds, grants, loans, or other funds made available by or through the State or any of its political subdivisions.

4/2/09 – Passed Senate 55-2-0. 1st Reading House.

SB 302 – Pension Credit for Laid off State Employees

Sen. Bomke (D – Springfield)

SUPPORT

Allows a State employee who was laid off but returned to any State employment to establish creditable service for the period of the layoff.

4/2/09 – Passed Senate 56-0-0. 1st Reading in House.

SB 1133 – E-Verify

Sen. Martinez (D – Chicago)/Rep. Currie (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Establishes that E-Verify is a voluntary federal program that allows employers to check the work eligibility of newly-hired employees against Social Security and Homeland Security databases. Provides employers with accurate information about the E-Verify program to allow an employer to make informed decision about whether to participate in the voluntary program. Establishes protections for workers from employers who abuse the program.

4/2/09 – Passed Senate 48-9-1. 1st Reading in House.

SB 1350 - Unemployment Insurance

Sen. Forby (D - Benton)/Rep. Phelps (D – Harrisburg)

SUPPORT

Provides locked out workers with 52 weeks of Unemployment Insurance benefits rather than the current 26 weeks.

4/2/09 – Passed House 37-19-1. 1st Reading in House.

SB 1559 – Buy American

Sen. Koehler (D – Peoria)

Rep. Hernandez (D – Cicero)

SUPPORT

Requires municipalities and school districts to purchase American made automobiles and trucks.

3/31/09 – Passed Senate 51-0-1. 1st Reading in House.



**SB 1602 – Public Service
Accountability**

Sen. Harmon (D - Oak Park)
Rep. Franks (D-Woodstock)

SUPPORT

Creates the Public Service Accountability Act. Specifies conditions under which a State executive branch agency may enter into a contract with a private contractor for the performance of services currently performed by public employees.

4/1/09 – Passed Senate 49-6-0. 1st Reading in House.

SB 1729 - Amtrak Public/Private Partnerships

Sen. Schoenberg (D - Evanston)
Rep. Hamos (D-Evanston)

SUPPORT

Authorizes the IDOT to enter into public-private partnerships for the acquisition of equipment for Amtrak passenger rail service.

4/1/09 – Passed Senate 52-0-0. 1st Reading in House.

SB 1783 – Quad Cities Development

Sen. Jacobs (D – Moline)/Rep. Sacia (R – Freeport)

Monitor

Increases the bonding authority of the Quad Cities Regional Economic Development Authority by \$250,000,000 and repeals the State's "moral obligation" for the bonds.

4/1/09 - Passed Senate 53-3-0. 1st Reading in House.

SB 1784 – Quad Cities Development

Sen. Jacobs (D – Moline)/Rep. Sacia (R – Freeport)

Monitor

Establishes that the Upper Mississippi River International Port District includes the area within the corporate limits of Whiteside and Rock Island Counties and changes the make-up of the Port District.

4/1/09 – Passed Senate 45-3-0. 1st Reading in House.

SB 1827 – Firefighter Pension

Sen. Noland (D – Elgin)/Rep. Beaubien (R-Wauconda)

SUPPORT

Amends the Downstate Firefighter Article of the Illinois Pension Code and allows firefighters employed by a village with a population of more than 9,000 but less than 12,000 on July 1, 2007 and were excluded from participation in a downstate firefighter fund prior to January 1, 1996 because the firefighter earned credit for that service under the Illinois Municipal Retirement

Fund Article for the same municipality to establish creditable service for those periods of employment for that municipality's emergency services as a firefighter, EMT, or paramedic.

4/2/09 – Passed Senate 30-19-4. 1st Reading in House

SB 1846 – McPier Bond Extension

Sen. Raoul (D – Chicago)/Rep. Burns (D-Chicago)

SUPPORT

Increases the bond authorization for the McCormick Place and Exposition Authority by \$147 million and extends the repayment schedule to 2050.

4/1/09 – Passed 44-9-2. 1st Reading in House.

SB 1909 – STAR Bonds

Sen. Clayborne (D – East St. Louis)
Rep. Holbrook (D – Belleville)

SUPPORT

Creates the Sales Tax and Revenue (STAR) bonds programs in Illinois as an economic development incentive tool designed to use new local and state sales tax revenues generated by a major tourism, entertainment and related destination project to pay for certain costs of the project. This legislation will assist with the construction of the University Town Center in Madison County.

4/1/09 – Passed Senate 51-4-1. 1st Reading in House.

SB 2252 – Wind Farms and Ethanol Projects

Sen. Sullivan (D – Rushville)
Rep. Mautino (D – Spring Valley)

SUPPORT

Creates a Green Energy Business program that would lend assistance in the encouragement, development, growth and expansion of green energy projects to allow Illinois to compete for renewable energy developments such as wind farms, solar panel farms and additional biodiesel and ethanol plants in Illinois. Specifies that certain projects would be covered by project labor agreements.

4/2/09 – Passed the Senate 59-0-0. 1st Reading in House.

SJR 35 – Employee Free Choice Act

Sen. Hutchison (D – Chicago Heights)

SUPPORT

Affirms the General Assembly's support for the provisions of the Employee Free Choice Act in the 111th Congress.

3/30/09 – Passed Senate Labor Committee 7-3-0.

Save the Date

Monday • June 8, 2009

2nd Annual COPE Golf Outing
at The Rail