



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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Published for Labor Activists

Jan. 9, 2009

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On These and Other Legislative Issues Important To Working People

The Illinois General Assembly will return to Springfield Jan. 12–15 next week. The 12th and 13th will be part of the 95th General Assembly. The 14th and 15th will be the beginning of the 96th General Assembly. On the 12th the Senate will convene at noon and the House will convene at 1 p.m.

ACTION IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE VOTES TO IMPEACH THE GOVERNOR

The Illinois House took an historic vote today to impeach Governor Rod Blagojevich. The House voted to pass House Resolution 1671 by a count of 114-1-1. The lone “no” vote was Rep. Milt Patterson (D – Chicago), while Rep. Elga Jeffries (D – Chicago) voted present and Rep. Ken Dunkin (D – Chicago) was absent for the vote. The motion to impeach the Governor now moves to the Illinois Senate, where they are expected to begin their proceedings on January 26th.

NEW MEMBERS OF THE 96TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 96th General Assembly will convene on Wednesday, January 14th. There will be many new faces coming to Springfield due to victories in the General Election in November. Their names and districts include:

- Will Burns** (D – 26th House District/Chicago)
- John Cavaletto** (R – 107th House District/Salem)
- Michael Connelly** (R – 48th House District/Lisle)
- Keith Farnham** (D – 43rd House District/Elgin – IUPAT MEMBER)
- Jehan Gordon** (D – 92nd House District/Peoria)
- Kay Hatcher** (R – 50th House District/Yorkville)
- Eddie Lee Jackson, Sr.** (D – 114th House District/E. St. Louis)
- Emily Klunk McAsey** (D – 85th House District/Lockport)
- Deborah Mell** (D – 40th House District/Chicago)
- Darlene Senger** (R – 96th House District/Naperville)
- Andre Thapedi** (D – 32nd House District/Chicago)
- Mark Walker** (D – 66th House District/Mt. Prospect)
- Michael Zalewski** (D – 21st House District/Chicago)
- Dan Duffy** (R – 26th Senate District/Barrington)
- Toi Hutchinson** (D – 40th Senate District/Olympia Fields)
- Emil Jones III** (D – 14th Senate District/Chicago)

HOUSE RECOGNIZES RAY HARRIS FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENTS

The Illinois House congratulated Ray Harris on the occasion of his retirement as Director of Intergovernmental Affairs of AFSCME Council 31. They adopted House Resolution 1665, sponsored by Rep. Marlow Colvin (D-Chicago), that recognized Ray and said that he served the interests of AFSCME members and was one of the most known and well respected union lobbyists. The Illinois AFL-CIO joins with the General Assembly in recognizing Ray for his accomplishments in the more than 20 years he served with AFSCME, and we wish him a long and healthy retirement.

Toi Hutchinson Appointed to 40th Senatorial Seat

On Monday, January 5, 2009, the Legislative Committee of the 40th Illinois Senate District voted unanimously for Mrs. Toi Hutchinson to replace Debbie Halvorson who held the seat from 1997 until November 2008 when she was elected to the U.S. Congress.

Hutchinson comes to the position with a wealth of experience. Prior to returning to law school, Hutchinson was Village Clerk of Olympia Fields, Illinois. She also served as Sen. Halvorson’s chief of staff.

Democratic leaders who appointed Hutchinson say she can hit the ground running in this new position and will be an asset to the district and the state.

Hutchinson, 35, and the mother of three, says she will focus on the needs of the people of her district. In a call with Illinois AFL-CIO Field Director Al Martin, Hutchinson reiterated her pledge to fight for working men and women in Illinois and to champion workers’ rights in Springfield.

According to AFL-CIO records, over 14,000 union members live in the 40th Senate District.

Jackson Appointed to Younger’s Seat

Earlier today, Eddie Lee Jackson, Sr., President Pro Tempore of the East St. Louis City Council was selected by the 114th District Legislative Committee to fill the vacancy in the 114th House District created by the passing of Representative Wyvetter Younger.

The Illinois AFL-CIO will be providing a more detailed biography on Monday.





Two Important Pay Equity Bills Pass U.S. House

Today, the U.S. House of Representatives passed two pay equity bills that will help end the gender pay gap in America.

The Lilly Ledbetter Act, named for the woman who proved a pay discrimination charge against her employer only to be told she had waited too long to sue, will allow workers to file pay discrimination charges up to 180 days after learning of the wrongful act. Previously the time limitation for filing the complaint began when the act was first committed. The Lilly Ledbetter Act – HR 11 passed 247-171. All Illinois Democrats voted for the bill. All Illinois Republicans voted against the bill.

The House also passed the Paycheck Fairness Act to strengthen the federal Equal Pay Act and close loopholes that have allowed employers to avoid responsibility for discriminatory pay. The Act – HR12 – passed 256-163. All Illinois Democrats voted for the bill, as did Republican Congressman Tim Johnson. All other Illinois Republicans voted against the bill.

Congressman Hare Elected Regional Whip, Appointed to the Transportation Committee; LaHood Tapped as National Transportation Secretary; Halvorson Sworn In

Illinois will be well represented in Washington this year as Barack Obama becomes the 44th President, Dick Durbin continues on as Senate Majority Whip and Congressman Phil Hare and Ray LaHood take on new, high-profile responsibilities.

On Dec. 19, President-elect Obama named retired U.S. Representative Ray LaHood as the new national Transportation Secretary. His selection promises to be critical in light of President-elect Obama's plans to create jobs through a large federal infrastructure renewal program. The AFL-CIO at the state and national levels has been fighting for years for a Capital Program that will jump start the economy and support millions of good-paying construction jobs in Illinois and across the country.

In addition, Congressman Phil Hare (D-17th CD) was unanimously elected Regional Whip for the House Democratic Leadership. In this new role Representative Hare will be responsible for unifying Democratic members from Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma on important legislative votes. Hare was also recently selected to serve on the powerful House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which will oversee the upcoming infrastructure stimulus plan.

Congresswoman Debbie Halvorson (D) was sworn in as the new Representative of the 11th Congressional District this week. Halvorson, the former State Senator from the 40th District, replaces Jerry Weller (R) and brings the Illinois Congressional count to 12 Democrats and 7 Republicans (with Congressman Rahm Emanuel's seat - 5th CD - still to be determined).

Illinois AFL-CIO/CFL Hosts Employee Free Choice Meeting

Illinois Labor leaders met today with national AFL-CIO representatives at the State Federation offices in Burr Ridge to discuss the status of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) and to outline our state strategy to ensure its passage.

The federal legislation is expected to be recalled in the U.S. House within the next few months. The Act passed the House in 2007 (110th Congress) 241-185 and gained majority support in the Senate the same year but did not have the votes to hold off a filibuster.

The Employee Free Choice Act would be the most groundbreaking federal Labor law in nearly 75 years. The Act would allow workers to form a union when the majority of employees at a worksite sign authorizations saying they want a union. It would guarantee workers a first contract within 90 days of union authorization and would strengthen penalties against corporations that break the law during organizing campaigns and first contract negotiations.

Today's meeting, attended by 100 Labor leaders, is the kick-off of Illinois' action plan to spread the work about the need for the Employee Free Choice Act and to begin dialogue with our Congressional delegation to make sure our supporters remain steadfast on this issue.