



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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**Call The Illinois AFL-CIO at (217) 544-4014 For More Information
On These And Other Legislative Issues Important To Working People**

*The Illinois House and Senate will return to Springfield on Tuesday, March 10th at noon.
Next Thursday March 12th is the House deadline to pass bills out of committee, and in the
Senate the deadline is Friday, March 13th.*

STATE NEWS

HB 338 – Renewable Fuels

Rep. Franks (D – Woodstock)
Sen. Althoff (R – Crystal Lake)

Monitor

Amends the Illinois Renewable Fuels Development Program Act. Provides that a grant recipient must be constructing, modifying, altering, or retrofitting a plant that has annual production capacity of no less than 5,000,000 (now, 30,000,000) gallons of renewable fuel per year.

3/3/09 – Passed House 104-0-0.

First Reading in the Senate.

HB 480 – Mileage Reimbursement Rate

Rep. Boland (D – Moline)

SUPPORT

Amends the State Finance Act. Provides that for personnel under the jurisdiction of the State travel control boards, the mileage reimbursement rate for state workers shall change at the same time as the federal reimbursement rate.

3/5/09 – Passed the House 93-16-0.

HB 613 - Competitive Bidding by Electronic Process

Rep. Eddy (R - Hutsonville)

Monitor

In provisions requiring certain contracts to be awarded by competitive bid, provides that the acceptance of bids sealed by a bidder and the opening of these bids at a public bid opening may be permitted by an electronic process for communicating, accepting, and opening competitive bids; requires certain safeguards.

3/5/09 – Passed Elementary & Secondary Ed 20-0-0.

Third Reading.

HB 2360 - Homeowner Emergency Loan

Rep. Ford (D - Chicago)

SUPPORT

Creates the Illinois Homeowner's Emergency Assistance Program Act. An eligible homeowner may receive up to \$6,000 or 3 months worth of mortgage assistance.

3/4/09 – Passed State Government Committee 17-0-0.

Second Reading.

HB 2445 - Omnibus Collective Bargaining Act

Rep. Chapa LaVia (D - Aurora)

SUPPORT

Amends the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act and the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act. Increases the number of Board attorneys and investigators, codifies that unions must provide union dues authorization cards OR majority petition to the boards, not both. Requires the boards to return decisions in a timely manner.

3/4/09 – Passed Labor Committee 15-9-0.

Second Reading.

SB 257 - Outsourcing

Sen. Noland (D - Elgin)

SUPPORT

Provides that companies that lose 100 or more employees due to outsourcing of jobs are ineligible to receive procurement contracts with the State, units of local government, or school districts or to receive government grants, loans, tax incentives, or other economic incentives. Requires certain companies that lose 100 or more employees to notify the Department of Labor about the loss.

3/5/09 – Passed Senate Labor 6-5-0.

Second Reading.

SB 261 - Sick Leave

Sen. Noland (D - Elgin)

SUPPORT

Allows non-instructional employees in schools to accrue sick time up to 240 days, from the current 180 days.

3/5/09 – Passed Senate Education Committee 7-4-0.

Second Reading.

SB 1369 - State Facility Overtime

Sen. Frerichs (D - Champaign)

SUPPORT

Creates the State Facility Overtime Act. Provides that the Director of the State agency responsible for the operation of specified State facilities (or the Director's designee or agent) may not require an employee to accept work in excess of an agreed upon, predetermined, and regularly scheduled daily work shift, not to exceed 40 hours per week.

3/5/09 – Passed Senate Labor Committee 11-1-0.

Second Reading.

Quigley Wins Special Primary for 5th District Seat

On Tuesday, Cook County Commissioner Mike Quigley won the Democratic special primary to fill the 5th Congressional District seat of former U.S. Rep. Rahm Emanuel, who is now chief of staff for President Obama.

Quigley, who beat 11 other Democratic candidates in the race, has been Cook County Commissioner since 1998. He received 22 percent of the Democratic votes cast.

Quigley will face Republican Rosanna Pulido and Green Party candidate Matthew Reichel in the April 7 special election.



EFCA Gets Strong Support from U.S. Leaders at AFL-CIO Executive Council Meeting

At the AFL-CIO Executive Council meeting in Miami this week, President Obama, Vice President Biden and Labor Secretary Solis assured union leaders of their continuing support for working families and the Employee Free Choice Act.

On Wednesday President Obama told union leaders via video, "I do not view the labor movement as part of the problem. To me, and to my administration, labor unions are a big part of the solution. We need to level the playing field for workers and the unions that represent their interests – because we cannot have a strong middle class without a strong labor movement."

He specifically addressed the Employee Free Choice Act at the end of his remarks, "...as we confront this crisis and work to provide health care to every American, rebuild our nation's infrastructure, move toward a clean energy economy and pass the Employee Free Choice Act, I want you to know that you will always have a seat at the table."

On Monday, Hilda Solis gave her first speech as the newly appointed Secretary of Labor to union members at a Miami church. She criticized the Bush Administration's handling of labor issues and told the crowd, "You can rest assured that there is now a new sheriff in town."

And on Thursday, Vice President Joe Biden told the Executive Council, "...I have a simple, basic belief, one that we're going to work hard to put into action: If a union is what you want, a union you're entitled to have."

Steepest Drop in Employment in 30 Years

Today, the Bureau of Labor Statistics released employment statistics for February that show the unemployment rate increased from 7.6 percent in January to 8.1 percent in February, making it the highest U.S. unemployment rate in over twenty-five years. An estimated 12.5 million Americans are now unemployed.

The February data shows 180,000 professional/business jobs were lost, approximately 168,000 manufacturing jobs were lost, over 100,000 construction jobs lost, 40,000 jobs lost in retail and over 30,000 jobs were lost in the leisure and hospitality industry.

Job growth was reported in the health care field.

Illinois led the nation in new unemployment claims for the week ending February 21, 2009 with 3,791 more claims being filed than the week ending February 14, 2009. The U.S. Department of Labor attributed the increase to layoffs in the construction trade and manufacturing industries. For the week ending February 29, 2009, the Illinois Department of Employment Security paid out over \$111 million in claims to unemployed workers.