



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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

*Published for Labor Activists*

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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 General Assembly is still in session today as we do the update. **Major issues to resolve include public employee pension funding and a fair budget to working families.** Resolution of these two issues is critical to adjourn by May 31<sup>st</sup>. Both chambers will be adjourning today and will return Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at noon.

## STATE NEWS

### General Assembly Passes Capital Bill

The General Assembly passed a \$29 billion capital construction bill, **Illinois Jobs Now!**, on Thursday to create and sustain thousands of jobs in Illinois. The legislation passed in a series of three bills: House Bill 255 (revenue stream), House Bill 312 (projects), and House Bill 2400 (bonding). The last capital construction plan in Illinois, **Illinois First**, was passed in 1998.

HB 255 was the more contentious bill because of the fee increases. In the Senate, the bill passed 47-12, and in the House the bill passed 86-30. Nearly \$1.12 billion dollars of revenue will be generated from HB 255, it will increase fees for vehicle registration, title/transfer and drivers' licenses. In addition, the legislation will increase sales tax on candy, wine, beer, and liquor. The plan also includes privatization of the lottery, which is estimated to raise \$150 million in new revenue. Lastly, the state will begin regulating and taxing video gaming throughout the state, such as video poker in taverns, truck stops and veteran and fraternal organizations.

The spending side of the capital plan, HB 312, was less contentious and passed unanimously in both chambers. It includes a total of:

- \$15.2 billion in funding for road programs
- \$150 million for AMTRACK passenger rail and \$300 million for CREATE. Additionally, \$20 million is provided for airports, which will capture \$360 million in federal funds.
- \$2 billion for transit projects. Of this amount, \$1.8 billion will be allocated to CTA, Metra, and Pace, the remaining \$600 billion will be provided for downstate transit capital projects.
- A total of \$1.5 billion is provided for the school construction program. The 24 school districts that received entitlements in FY 02 are included in this funding. Funding for those 24 schools totals approximately \$149 million.
- A total of \$718 million is provided for capital projects at public universities. Of this amount, \$604.9 million is for capital projects, \$62.7 million is for deferred maintenance projects and \$50 million is for emergency and security projects.
- \$150 million for state parks

House Bill 2400, which increased the states bonding authority by \$2.8 billion, passed unanimously in both chambers as well.

### Omnibus Collective Bargaining Bill Passes General Assembly

The General Assembly passed HB 2445 this week and the legislation will now go to the Governor's desk. In 2003, the General Assembly adopted changes to the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act to allow employees to form a union by simply signing union cards or a majority interest petition (HB 3396). HB 2445 seeks to clarify/codify that employees only have to sign one, not both. Many of the changes in the legislation are a codification of an Illinois Supreme Court decision in 2008, County of DuPage v. Illinois Labor Relations Board.

In addition, the legislation will:

- Keep any documents, provided to the Illinois Public Labor Relations Board and Educational Labor Relations Board, confidential and not to be released to employers.
- Sets a 120 day time limit for the board(s) to certify the employee organization after the presentation of dues cards or interest petitions to the Illinois Public Labor and Educational Labor Relations Boards. The legislation allows an additional 120 days for a hearing process on the evidence provided.
- Requires the Labor Relations Board to employ 16 attorneys and 6 investigators, and the Educational Labor Relations Board to employ 8 attorneys and 5 investigators.

# Gov. Quinn Signs Letter Supporting EFCA



On Thursday, at the request of the Illinois AFL-CIO, Gov. Patrick Quinn signed a pro-Employee Free Choice Act letter that will be sent to President Barack Obama and Congressional leaders.

Gov. Quinn officially signed the letter during a labor event at the Governor's Mansion in Springfield that he hosted along with the Illinois AFL-CIO and affiliated unions.

"The freedom to form and join unions is a fundamental human right protected by our constitutional freedom of association, our nation's labor laws, and international human rights laws," Quinn says in the letter. "As Illinois' own Abraham Lincoln said over one hundred years ago, 'All that harms labor is treason to America.' Today it is still our duty to protect workers' rights on the job."

The outdoor BBQ at the Governor's Mansion was attended by nearly 200 labor leaders.

## SB 1715 – Public Labor Relations

Sen. Harmon (D – Oak Park)

Rep. Miller (D – Dolton)

### SUPPORT

Amends the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act. With respect to collective bargaining of an initial agreement between non-public safety employees and an employer with fewer than 35 employees, establishes a schedule for (i) commencing bargaining, (ii) in the event of a dispute, requesting mediation from the Illinois Public Labor Relations Board in accordance with the Act's provisions for public safety employee mediation, and (iii) in the event of an impasse, requesting arbitration in accordance with certain of the Act's provisions for public safety employee arbitration.

**5/22/09 – Passed House 77-38-0.**

**Passed both chambers.**

## 2ND ANNUAL COPE GOLF OUTING REMINDER

Monday • June 8, 2009

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## NATIONAL NEWS

### New Study finds Employer Anti- Union Tactics Intensifying

A study released this week by well-known labor expert and Cornell University professor Kate Bronfenbrenner, Ph.D., shows anti-union tactics by employers during union organizing drives has greatly intensified over the last two decades.

The study, published by American Rights at Work and the Economic Policy Institute, indicates it has become standard practice for workers to be subject to threats, interrogation, harassment, surveillance and retaliation when they support a union in the workplace. Compared to the 1990's, employers are more than twice as likely to use 10 or more oppressive tactics in their anti-union campaigns.

The study found:

- 63% of employers interrogate workers in mandatory one-on-one meetings;
- 54% of employers threaten workers in those meetings;
- 57% of employers threaten to close the worksite;
- 47% of employers threaten to cut wages and benefits; and
- 34% of employers fire workers.

The study found that of the workers, who do succeed in forming a union, 52 percent are still without a contract after one year and 37 percent remain without a contract after two years.

Bronfenbrenner's research also overwhelmingly shows the ineffectiveness of current labor law to protect and enforce workers' rights during the organizing and election process.

To see the full report go to [www.americanrightsatwork.org](http://www.americanrightsatwork.org).

### Congress Passes Pro-Consumer Credit Card Bill

This week, both the U.S. House and Senate passed a bill that will protect consumers from mistreatment by credit card companies. The bill now goes to President Obama who has vowed to sign it immediately.

The legislation prohibits credit card companies from arbitrarily raising interest rates on existing balances unless the borrower is at least 60 days late and from charging certain fees. The bill will also restrict card companies from issuing cards to college students unless they can prove the ability to repay debt or have a parent willing to co-sign on the card.

According to figures from the Government Accountability Office and the Federal Reserve, the credit card industry makes \$15 billion a year from penalty fees and 18 percent of all credit card users in the U.S. pay an interest rate well over 20 percent.

The law will go into effect nine months after it's signed.