



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

PUBLISHED FOR LABOR ACTIVISTS BY THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO

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The General Assembly returned this week for three days. Its primary focus was considering bills in committees, however, some floor action was seen on both sides. Next week both chambers will be in four days (Tuesday-Friday), and April 23 is a deadline day to pass bills out of committees in both chambers.

The General Assembly is only scheduled to be in session for three more weeks, with the adjournment date set for May 7. As that day draws closer, pressure will continue to mount on legislators to pass a responsible budget. The Illinois AFL-CIO will be in the capitol each day to fight for frontline service workers, teachers, firefighters, rail employees, and all working families in Illinois.

Governor signs Pension Bill in spite of Labor's Protests

On Wednesday, Gov. Quinn signed the so-called pension reform bill (SB 1946 – PA 96-889) against the wishes of Labor and with no prior notification to the Illinois AFL-CIO.

“They didn’t invite us to the table when they were crafting the bill and they sure as hell didn’t invite us to the signing,” said State Labor Federation President Michael T. Carrigan. “They designed and passed this legislation over our protests and we won’t soon forget it.”

The bill strips down benefits for future public employees, extends the retirement age to 67 and does absolutely nothing to fund the current \$80 billion debt owed by the state to current state workers’ and teachers’ pensions.

“Virtually every public employee—ranging from teachers to correctional officers to sanitation workers—hired in Illinois beginning in January will be working just as hard as their coworkers hired before that date for much poorer retirement benefits,” said Henry Bayer, Executive Director and Roberta Lynch, Deputy Director, AFSCME Council 31 in a joint statement. “That’s what’s being hailed as ‘pension reform’ in the press and political circles all across the state of Illinois... In reality, this legislation is nothing more than a flat-out assault on the retirement security of working families—part of the ongoing corporate-led effort to wipe-out defined benefit pension plans in our country.”

Despite Labor’s call for the Governor to use his amendatory veto power to make changes, he signed the bill, saying “From the moment I took office, I have worked to overhaul Illinois’ pension system....” Then he thanked Democratic leaders, “I congratulate House Speaker Madigan and Senate President Cullerton for their leadership on this crucial issue.”

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HB 4673 – Fees for Unmarked Trucks

Rep. D’Amico (D – Chicago)

Sen. Munoz (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Provides that a construction contractor or subcontractor operating a second division vehicle commercially in this State that fails to display on the side of the vehicle or its trailer the name of the company for which it is employed is guilty of a petty offense with a fine of not less than \$500 (instead of a petty offense with a fine not to exceed \$100).

2/16/10 – Passed House 70-38-0.

4/13/10 – Passed Senate Transportation Committee 6-3-1. Second Reading.

HB 4797 – Wind Farms

Rep. Mautino (D – Spring Valley)

Sen. Harmon (D – Oak Park)

SUPPORT

Extends the method of tax assessment on wind farms to 2016 (currently 2011).

3/18/10 – Passed House 114-0-0.

4/14/10 – Passed Senate Revenue Committee 9-0-0. Second Reading.

HB 4818 – Upper Mississippi International Port District

Rep. Sacia (R – Freeport)

Sen. Bivins (R – Dixon)

Monitor

Allows registered voters of a county included in the Upper Mississippi International Port District to petition the local election authority (now, State Board of Elections) requesting the question of whether the county should be disconnected from the District to be placed on a ballot. Effective immediately.

3/17/10 – Passed House 115-0-0.

4/14/10 – Passed Senate Local Government 5-0-0. Second Reading.

HB 4820 – School Bus Driver Records

Rep. William Davis (D – Chicago)

Sen. Sandoval (D – Cicero)

Monitor

Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code and Criminal Code of 1961. Provides that in addition to existing requirements, applicants for a school bus driver permit must not have been convicted of aggravated reckless driving or driving while under the influence of alcohol, other drugs, intoxicating compounds or any combination thereof (current law contains a denial of school bus permit for driving while intoxicated).

3/4/10 – Passed House 110-1-0.

4/13/10 – Passed Senate Transportation Committee 7-0-0. Second Reading.

HB 4842 – Primary Election Voter Guide

Rep. Currie (D – Chicago)

Sen. Sandoval (D – Cicero)

SUPPORT

Requires (now, permits) the State Board of Elections to publish an Internet voters’ guide before each general primary in the same

(Continued on next page)

manner that the board does before each general election.

2/17/10 – Passed House 108-0-0.

4/13/10 – Passed Senate Elections Committee 7-0-1. Second Reading.

HB 4873 – School and Commercial Bus Permits

Rep. William Davis (D – Chicago)

Sen. Hutchinson (D – Chicago Heights)

Monitor

Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code. Adds luring of a minor, solicitation of a sex act, aggravated battery of a senior citizen, cyberstalking, arson, use of a weapon, and meth use offenses to the list of existing offenses that disqualify a person for a school bus driver permit or a commercial driver's license. Effective immediately.

3/4/10 – Passed House 111-0-0.

4/14/10 – Passed Senate Criminal Law 8-0-0. Second Reading.

HB 4987 – Rail Safety

Rep. Holbrook (D – Belleville)

Sen. Haine (D – Alton)

SUPPORT

Increases the penalty to a Class 4 felony for willfully placing an object or objects on active railroad tracks or railroad right of way which would adversely affect safe railroad operations.

3/11/10 – Passed House 112-0-0.

4/14/10 – Passed Senate Criminal Law 8-0-0. Second Reading.

HB 5120 – School Bus Drivers

Rep. Rose (R – Charleston)

Sen. DeLeo (D – Chicago)

Monitor

Provides that a school bus must contain an operating cell phone or two-way radio (rather than just a two-way radio) while the school bus driver is in possession of a school bus. Further provides that the cell phone or two-way radio must be turned on and adjusted in a manner that would alert the school bus driver of an incoming communication request. Prohibits use of cell phone while bus is in motion.

2/25/10 – Passed House 108-0-0.

4/14/10 – Passed Senate Executive Committee 10-0-0. Second Reading.

HB 5514 – Roofing Contractors

Rep. Rita (D – Blue Island)

SUPPORT

Amends the Illinois Roofing Industry Licensing Act. Adds that a person is guilty of identity theft, if in the course of applying for a building permit, they provide a license number of a roofing contractor who will not do the work on the project. Class 4 felony. Effective Immediately.

3/26/10 – Passed House 86-7-0.

4/14/10 – Passed Senate Licensed Activities 9-0-0. Second Reading.

HB 5712 – Railroad Track Equipment

Rep. Nekritz (D – Des Plaines)

Sen. Sandoval (D – Cicero)

SUPPORT

Requires vehicles and pedestrians to yield at rail crossings for approaching railroad track equipment in the same manner as the law requires for approaching trains.

3/2/10 – Passed House 102-0-0.

4/13/10 – Passed Senate Transportation Committee 9-0-0. Second Reading.

HB 5820 – Election Nomination

Rep. Lang (D – Skokie)

Sen. Raoul (D – Chicago)

Monitor

Candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor must run as a team for nomination in a General Primary election.

3/12/10 – Passed House 90-5-3.

4/13/10 – Passed Senate Elections 8-0-0. Second Reading.

SB 575 – Alexander/Cairo Port District

Sen. Forby (D – Benton)

Rep. Phelps (D – Harrisburg)

Monitor

Creates the Alexander-Cairo Port District Act. Provides that the District shall be governed by a 7-member Board. Governor to appoint 4 members, and local officials to appoint the other 3. Sets forth the appointment and terms of the Board members. Sets forth the powers and duties of the District, including the power to issue certain permits, the power to locate, establish, and maintain a public airport, the power of eminent domain, and the power to issue bonds.

3/12/10 – Passed Senate 41-7-0.

4/14/10 – Passed Counties and Townships Committee 6-0-0. Second Reading.

SB 2540 – Home Repair Injuries

Sen. Wilhelmi (D – Crest Hill)

Rep. Thapedi (D – Chicago)

Neutral

Provides that any person who suffers actual damage as a result of a violation of the Home Repair and Remodeling Act may bring a court action under the Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act. (was over \$1,000)

3/9/10 – Passed Senate 56-0-0.

4/15/10 – Passed House 112-0-0.

To Governor's desk.

SB 2615 – Community College Borrowing Authorization

Sen. Forby (D – Benton)

Rep. Eddy (D – Hutsonville)

SUPPORT

Amends the Public Community College Act. Provides that for a period of 3 years after the effective date, in order to create, maintain or increase a working cash fund, a community college board may borrow money to fund its day to day operations.

3/10/10 – Passed Senate 50-4-0.

4/14/10 – Passed House Higher Education 4-0-0. Second Reading.

SB 3004 – Continuation Coverage of Illinois COBRA

Sen. Garret (D – Highwood)

Rep. Osmond (R – Antioch)

SUPPORT

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, passed by Congress in February 2009, set a time frame by which continuation and notice concerning continuing medical coverage (federal COBRA) must be granted for unemployed workers (September 1, 2008 to December 31, 2009). On March 15th, Congress extended the deadline to June 2010 (See accompanying story). SB 3004 simply tracks with the legislation regarding federal COBRA and requires that Illinois shall honor that date as well for the state continuation coverage (Illinois COBRA). Federal COBRA requires employers with 20 or more employees to offer continuation packages, while Illinois COBRA covers all employers regardless of size.

3/12/10 – Passed Senate 51-0-0.

4/13/10 – Passed House 112-0-0.

To Governor's desk.

SB 3291 – Agencies

Sen. Koehler (D – Peoria)

Rep. Colvin (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Beginning July 1, 2010, in order to attract and retain a stable, qualified, and healthy workforce, the Department of Human Services and the Department of Healthcare and Family services may reimburse individual community service providers serving individuals with developmental disabilities or an individual intermediate care facility for the developmentally disabled for spending incurred to provide improved wages and benefits to its employees serving developmentally disabled individuals. In order to qualify for a reimbursement, a provider or facility must submit to the appropriate agency, before January 1 of each year, documentation of a legally binding commitment to increase spending for the purpose of providing improved wages and benefits to its eligible employees during the next year.

3/10/10 – Passed Senate 38-11-0.

4/14/10 – Passed House Human Services 7-0-0. Second Reading.

SB 3568 – Wage Payment and Collection

Sen. Delgado (D – Chicago)

Rep. Hernandez (D – Cicero)

SUPPORT

Establishes procedures for an employee who has not been paid the wage the employee is entitled by the Act to recover by filing a claim with the Department or in a civil action, but not both.

3/18/10 – Passed Senate 56-0-0.

4/14/10 – Passed House Labor committee 19-3-0. Second Reading.

IWIL at AFL-CIO

The Illinois AFL-CIO hosted the 2010 class of the Illinois Women's Institute for Leadership (IWIL) in Springfield this week. The twelve women and their leaders visited the General Assembly and took part in training sessions on campaign finance, grassroots organizing and regional diversity. IWIL recruits and trains Democratic women in our state to run for public office and is strongly supported by Labor.



– Save Our State – SOS Rally!

The Coalition for a Responsible Budget is holding a rally in Springfield on **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21** beginning at 11:30 am to call attention to the dire need for new state revenue. AF-SCME, SEIU and community organizations are spearheading the rally. They hope to make it “the largest demonstration Springfield has ever seen.” Please plan to attend if your schedule allows. For more information go to:

www.abetterillinois.com.

For those coming to Springfield for the rally or just to visit the General Assembly, you should be aware that parking around the Illinois AFL-CIO office will not be available. All spots will be used to accommodate the large number of people (expecting 10,000) for the rally. In addition, streets around the capitol may be inaccessible due to the large volume of people wanting a responsible budget. There is metered parking along Edwards and Cook Street.

Brady Opposes Illinois Minimum Wage; Refuses to Release Income Info

GOP candidate for Governor Bill Brady is showing to the rest of Illinois what Labor has known for years, he stands with Big Business over the interests of working families in Illinois.

A campaign spokesman said Brady supports cutting the state's minimum wage by one dollar an hour (after July 1) by connecting it with the lower federal wage level. Many states have decided to boost wage thresholds higher than the federal level, which does not even come close to keeping families out of poverty.

“Sen. Brady's voting record shows he doesn't believe in a fair wage for a day's work,” Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael T. Carrigan said. “We have to ask, What's next for him? Cutting Prevailing Wages for construction workers? Gutting overtime and the 40-hour work week? Good labor law has taken decades to create in Illinois. Bill Brady and the conservatives can destroy it in one legislative session.”

On a related note, while Brady has proposed cutting the state's minimum wage, he publically refused to release information on his income saying, “I don't feel there is any good reason to do it. There is nothing gained by releasing that and I'm not going to do it at this time.”

Showing where his true allegiance lies, Brady voted against minimum wage increases in 2006 and 2003, as well as opposing overtime pay protections in 2006, all the while voting against corporate accountability measures twice during that time.

IDOT Plan Unveiled

On Thursday, Governor Quinn and Secretary of Transportation Gary Hannig unveiled a six-year proposed highway improvement program. The program totals \$12.84 billion and will cover FY11–FY16. This six-year program will maintain 4,739 miles of highways and replace or rehabilitate 763 bridges. For additional information go to www.dot.state.il.us/hip1116/hwyimprov.htm

NATIONAL

Health Care Reform **FACT**

The 2010 Health Care Reform bill that was signed into law by President Obama last month will help ensure that American children have proper care. Starting this year, children can not be denied health insurance coverage because of a pre-existing condition and they will be allowed to stay on their parent's policy if necessary until they are 26 years old. To read more details about what the Health Care Reform bill means to you go to www.aflcio.org/healthcare or to www.retiredamericans.org and download printable fact sheets.



OBAMA SIGNS UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS EXTENSION

President Obama signed into law late Thursday a bill to extend unemployment benefits for long-term unemployed workers. The legislation provides for short-term extensions for unemployment compensation, COBRA health insurance premiums, Medicare physician payments, federal poverty guidelines, flood insurance programs and small business loan guarantee programs, according to the White House.

The measure passed the Senate by a vote of 59-38 and the House by a vote of 289-112. In prior weeks unemployment benefit extensions were blocked procedurally by the Republicans. The new law provides up to 99 weeks unemployment benefits. It is a temporary extension through June 2 that gives House and Senate Democrats time to iron out a measure to fund the program through the end of the year. In the Senate, both Senators Durbin and Burriss supported the measure. In the United States House, 18 of the 19 members of Congress from the Illinois delegation supported the extension. The lone hold-out from Illinois failing to support the long-term unemployed was Republican Congressman Peter Roskam (R-6). The President is urging Congress to extend benefits through the rest of the year.

The jobless rate in Illinois rose to 11.5% last month, according to figures released by the Illinois Department of Employment Security. That's up from 11.4% in February. A year ago, the rate stood at 8.6%.

While the unemployment rate in March was the highest since July 1983, the state did record an increase in jobs for a third consecutive month. Last month, employers added 3,000 jobs. The three-month moving average shows a gain of 8,900 jobs.

"Three consecutive months of job growth offers cautious optimism that the effects of this national recession might be softening," IDES Director Maureen O'Donnell said in a statement.

Website Outlines Big Banks' Efforts to Stop Reforms

On Tuesday AFL-CIO President Trumka hosted a webcast to introduce and answer questions about Labor's new Executive Paywatch web site www.paywatch.org. The site chronicles CEO pay, benefits and bonuses as well as the huge sums American banks are spending to stop financial reform from passing through Congress.

The AFL-CIO is campaigning for banking reform laws and the creation of an independent federal consumer protection agency with the power to create and implement its own regulations.

There are currently bills in both the House and Senate to create a consumer protection agency. The House bill would create an independent agency, but the Senate bill would make the agency a department within the Federal Reserve.

Labor is also pressuring major Wall Street banks to resume lending to small business in an effort to create jobs and to start paying a tax on banking transactions. According to the AFL-CIO, the tax, a half cent on every dollar of financial transactions, would raise an estimated \$175 to \$350 billion. The money would be used to create jobs.



Save the Dates

3rd Annual Illinois AFL-CIO COPE Golf Outing

June 7: Political Briefing and Golf Outing
June 8: Illinois AFL-CIO Endorsement Session

The RAIL Golf Course • Springfield

**For information contact Terri Payne:
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