



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**PUBLISHED FOR LABOR ACTIVISTS BY THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO**

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*The Illinois General Assembly will work four days next week. The Senate will convene at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, and will work through Wednesday. The House will return at noon on Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, and will work through Thursday. The bill introduction deadline for both the House and Senate is Thursday, February 11<sup>th</sup>.*

## 2009 Semi-Annual Lobbyist Expenditure Report Due

A final reminder for all of our affiliates about the 2009 Semi-annual lobbyist expenditure report deadline. The last day to file your report for expenditures on state officials is **Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>**. You are required by state law to report all expenditures on state officials from July 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup> of 2009. Lobbyist registration for 2010 has been temporarily suspended due to state and federal litigation regarding registration fees. Please call Jason Keller at 217.492.2632 if you have any questions or concerns on this matter.

## Giannoulas, Quinn Head Dem Ticket in Fall

Labor endorsed candidate for United States Senate, Alexi Giannoulas rode a strong downstate showing in the Democratic Primary Election Tuesday securing the nomination for U.S. Senate against GOP winner Mark Kirk.

Giannoulas and Kirk represent polar ends of Labor issues. Giannoulas is a strong advocate for the Employee Free Choice Act, while Kirk voted against the bill. Giannoulas has centered his campaign around job creation and working families' struggle for job security and decent wages. Hartmarx workers, whose jobs Giannoulas helped save when they were threatened in a buyout, joined him on the stage for his victory speech Tuesday.

In the Governor's race, Gov. Pat Quinn edged State Comptroller Dan Hynes after a sometimes bitter campaign by 8,000 votes. Quinn will apparently face off against Bloomington State Senator Bill Brady who leads fellow State Senator Kirk Dillard by just over 400 votes. Dillard has not conceded the race yet and may request a recount.

Other statewide winners were: Scott Lee Cohen (D-Lt. Governor); Jason Plummer (R-Lt. Governor); David Miller (D-Comptroller); Judy Baar Topinka (R-Comptroller); Robin Kelly (D-Treasurer). Incumbents Lisa Madigan and Jesse White ran unopposed.

All congressional incumbents won their races Tuesday. In the open 10<sup>th</sup> CD vacated by Kirk, Dan Seals edged Julie Hamos in the Democratic primary. On the Republican side, Beth Coulson, a favorite heading into the election, was defeated by Robert Dold. In other news, Randy Hultgren will face off against Congressman Bill Foster in the 14<sup>th</sup> and Congresswoman Debbie Halvorson will face Republican Adam Kinzinger

In the state senate, all incumbents won and two endorsed candidates, John Mulroe (10<sup>th</sup>) and Tim Dudley (51<sup>st</sup>), picked up primary victories. In the House, all incumbents won races with the exception of Republican Suzie Bassi (54<sup>th</sup>). Newcomers Arthur Turner (9<sup>th</sup>), Ann Williams (11<sup>th</sup>), Robyn Gabel (18<sup>th</sup>), Thaddeus Jones (29<sup>th</sup>), Kelly Burke (36<sup>th</sup>), Dennis Ahern (71<sup>st</sup>), and Charles Landers (98<sup>th</sup>) all won their Democratic primaries.

## State Supreme Court Again Rules Medical Malpractice Caps Unconstitutional

Yesterday, for the third time in recent state history, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that limiting the amount of damages a victim of medical malpractice could be awarded is unconstitutional and "infringes upon the inherent power of the judiciary."

In 2005, the Illinois General Assembly passed a law capping the amount victims could collect for pain and suffering to \$500,000 from doctors and \$1 million from hospitals, even though the highest state court had twice before ruled caps unconstitutional. The Illinois AFL-CIO fought hard against the bill calling it "unfair, unjust and unconstitutional."

"Thursday's Illinois Supreme Court ruling is a victory for working families whose lives and livelihoods are destroyed by medical negligence," said Michael T. Carrigan, president, Illinois AFL-CIO. "All citizens of this state should have the right to a trial by their peers to decide appropriate compensation. Hopefully this decision will finally put an end to the efforts of greedy insurance corporations to deny victims their due process."

To read the Court's full ruling go to [http://state.il.us/court/Opinions/recent\\_supreme.asp](http://state.il.us/court/Opinions/recent_supreme.asp)

The Illinois House returned to Springfield this week following Primary Election day on Tuesday. The Senate did not convene this week. There was little substantive action taken on the House floor or in committees this week. However, legislators and lobbyists worked together on drafting and introducing proposed bills for the Spring session. The following bills are just a selection of introduced legislation that we will track over the next few months. We will continue to keep you abreast as key legislation moves through the General Assembly. For a complete view of bills we are tracking, please go to our website to view our chart at: <http://www.ilaf-cio.org/laborbills.htm>.

**HB 4673 – Fees for Unmarked Trucks**  
Rep. D’Amico (D – Chicago)

**Monitor**

Requires a construction contractor or subcontractor operating a commercial vehicle in the State to display on the side of the vehicle or its trailer the name of the company for which it is employed. Failure to do so is a Class C misdemeanor with a fine of not less than \$500 (current law is a petty offense with a fine not to exceed \$100).

2/4/10 – Passed Vehicles & Safety Committee 6-0-0. Second Reading.

**HB 5018 – Continuation Coverage of Illinois COBRA**

Rep. May (D – Highwood)

**SUPPORT**

The federal stimulus package passed by Congress set a time frame by which continuation and notice concerning continuing medical coverage (federal COBRA) must be granted. Those dates were from September 1, 2008 to December 31, 2009. The federal government has pushed that deadline back to February 2010 now, and is rumored to push it further back. HB 5018 simply tracks with the legislation regarding federal COBRA and states that whatever date the feds set for coverage, then 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.

1/21/10 – Referred to House Rules.

**HB 5154 - FOIA Trailer Bill**  
Rep. Chapa LaVia (D - Aurora)

**SUPPORT**

Amends the Personnel Record Review Act. Provides that disclosure of performance evaluations under the Act is prohibited. This would pertain to all public employees.

1/29/10 - Referred to House Rules.

**HB 5155 – Mandatory Employer Meetings**

Rep. McGuire (D – Joliet)

**SUPPORT**

Creates the Employer Religious or Mandatory Workplace Meeting Act. Prohibits an employer from requiring an employee to attend an employer-sponsored meeting or participate in communication for the purpose of communicating the employer's opinion about religious or political matters. Prohibits an employer from taking or threatening any adverse employment action against an employee as a means of requiring an employee to attend such a meeting or participate in such communication or because the employee makes a good faith report of a violation or a suspected violation. Authorizes civil actions by aggrieved employees and provides for relief. Requires an employer to post notices of employee rights under the Act.

1/29/10 – Referred to House Rules

**HR 551 - Federal Assistance**

Rep. Ford (D - Chicago)

**SUPPORT**

Urges Congress to provide financial as-

sistance to states so that state governments will be able to address budget deficits.

2/3/10 – Passed State Government Committee 15-1-0. Resolution Calendar.

**SB 2620 - Employer of Campaign Contributor**

Sen. Cronin (R - Lombard)

**Monitor**

Amends the Election Code. If a political committee receives a donation of \$500 or more, the committee must make a good faith effort to ascertain the occupation and employer of the campaign contributor of more than \$500. If the committee is unable to ascertain that information within 30 days of receiving the contribution, then the committee must return to the contributor the amount in excess of \$500. Effective January 1, 2011.

1/21/10 - Referred to Committee on Assignments.

**SB 2925 - College/University Registration and Voting**

Sen. Frerichs (D - Champaign)

**SUPPORT**

Amends the Election Code. Requires election authorities to conduct grace period registration, grace period voting, and early voting on public university, college, and community college campuses within their jurisdictions. Effective immediately.

1/28/10 - Referred to Committee on Assignments.

**Statement of US Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis on January Employment Numbers**

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis issued a statement on the January 2010 Employment Situation report released today. The following is a synopsis of her statement:

“This past January, the economy lost 20,000 jobs, and the unemployment rate dropped to 9.7 percent.

While today's report shows positive signs that the economy is moving in the right direction, the numbers underscore that we still have work to do to get Americans back to work.

The president has made it clear that job creation is our number one focus in 2010. The president has proposed a broad approach toward job creation that includes assistance for small businesses, large-scale infrastructure projects, and investments in clean energy.

At the Department of Labor we are supporting this administration's emphasis on jobs by training workers. When businesses are ready to hire, we want to make sure they can find skilled workers and that the millions of unemployed have the

right skills for those jobs. Through the Recovery Act we put nearly \$4 billion into are workforce system for training and reemployment services.

Despite the bumpy road to recovery, we have made progress. Gross domestic product rose a very strong 5.7 percent in the fourth quarter. Strong and steady growth is needed for job growth to return and to put Americans back to work.

We are focused on doing everything possible to stem job losses, stimulate the economy and make ‘good jobs for everyone’ a reality. There are clear signs of progress in this effort, but we remain well aware that our nation can't reach its full potential while a single American is unemployed or underemployed.”

