



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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

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*The General Assembly will return to Springfield on Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Both chambers will convene at noon, however, there are committees meeting at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday. If your organization has introduced legislation in the General Assembly, or needs assistance in drafting legislation, please contact us and we will be happy to lend our support.*

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY NEWS

The General Assembly returned for three days this week. Most of the work was done in committees. The deadline to pass bills out of Senate committees is March 5<sup>th</sup>, while in the House it is March 12<sup>th</sup>. The pressure will begin to increase for General Assembly members and lobbyists to research, pass, or stop bills that have been assigned to committee. The Illinois AFL-CIO will be in constant communication with our affiliates around the state regarding how legislation will impact you. These are the noteworthy bills that passed this week. For a complete view of the legislation that the Illinois AFL-CIO is tracking, please visit: [www.ilaf-cio.org/laborbills.htm](http://www.ilaf-cio.org/laborbills.htm).

### **HB 4673 – Fees for Unmarked Trucks**

Rep. D'Amico (D – Chicago)

Sen. Munoz (D – Chicago)

#### **SUPPORT**

Requires a construction contractor or subcontractor operating second division vehicles commercially in Illinois 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 petty offense with a fine of not less than \$500 (current law is a petty offense with a fine not to exceed \$100).

*2/16/10 – Passed House 70-38-0.*

*Referred to Senate Assignments*

### **HB 4683 – African American Employment Act**

Rep. Ford (D – Chicago)

#### **SUPPORT**

Creates the African American Employment Plan Act. Provides that the purposes of the Act are to: (1) improve State services delivery to Illinois' African Americans; (2) increase the number of African Americans who are employed and promoted throughout state government; (3) assist State agencies to meet goals established by the African American Employment Plan; and (4) establish an African American Employment Plan Advisory Council. Provides that the rights of employees covered by a collective bargaining agreement shall not be affected by the Act.

*2/17/10 – Passed House Labor*

*Committee 23-1-0. Second Reading.*

### **HB 4744 – Thomson Prison**

Rep. Tryon (R – Crystal Lake)

Sen. Althoff (D – Crystal Lake)

#### **SUPPORT**

Requires the General Assembly to approve sales of any state assets worth more than \$1 million. The proposal could possibly halt the Obama administration's plan to buy the northwest Illinois Thomson state prison to house inmates and detainees from Guantanamo Bay. Labor's support of this legislation is to help protect state resources, and to ensure there is enough space for Illinois' prison inmates and guards.

*2/17/10 – Passed House 81-31-0.*

*Referred to Senate Assignments.*

### **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 manner that the board does before each general election.

*2/17/10 – Passed House 108-0-0.*

*Referred to Senate Assignments.*

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

Rep. May (D – Highwood)

#### **SUPPORT**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, passed by Congress in February 2009, set a time frame by which continua-

tion and notice concerning continuing medical coverage (federal COBRA) must be granted for unemployed workers (September 1, 2008 to December 31, 2009). Last fall, Congress extended the deadline to February 2010. Congress is currently considering legislation to extend the COBRA coverage for the unemployed. HB 5018 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.

*2/18/10 – Passed the House 112-0-0.*

*Referred to Senate Rules.*

### **SB 416 – Public University and Medicaid Borrowing**

Sen. Trotter (D – Chicago)

#### **SUPPORT**

Provides authorization for most public universities to borrow money in anticipation of receiving payments from the State of Illinois. It requires these monies to be repaid within eighteen months and provides maximum limits. The University of Illinois opted out of this legislation. In addition, it allows the state to borrow \$250 million to pay Medicaid expenses, which will help capture an additional \$400 million in federal matching funds.

*2/17/10 – Passed Senate Executive Committee 8-5-0. Second Reading.*

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**SB 1868 – McCormick Place**  
President Cullerton (D – Chicago)  
Rep. Hamos (D – Evanston)

**Monitor**

The terms of current members of the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority Board will end 30 days after the effective date of the bill. Within the same 30 days of the effective date, an interim board shall be appointed. The Governor shall appoint three members, one of which shall have academic credentials in labor law or human resources. The Mayor of Chicago shall

appoint three members as well. The Mayor shall appoint a chair of the board, with the Governor's approval. Total of seven board members. Effective date is February 17, 2010.

*Passed House 112-0-0.*

*Passed Senate 39-11-1.*

***2/17/10 - Signed by Governor PA 96-0882.***

**SB 2540 – Home Repair Injuries**

Sen. Wilhelmi (D – Crest Hill)

**Neutral**

Amends the Home Repair and Remodeling Act. Provides that any person who

suffers actual damage as a result of a violation of the Home Repair and Remodeling Act may bring an action pursuant to the Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act. Eliminates language making it unlawful for any person engaged in the business of home repairs and remodeling to work before obtaining a signed contract or work order over \$1,000.

***2/16/10 – Passed Judiciary Hearing 10-0-0. Third Reading.***

## STATE NEWS

### Labor, Community Groups Continue to Push State Leaders to Raise Revenue

*“Do The Right Thing. Raise Revenue!”*

Wednesday thousands of union members, concerned citizens and grass roots organizations from around the state rallied at the Capitol calling on legislators and state leaders to stop playing politics and solve the state's budget woes.

A loud and angry crowd filled the Capitol rotunda and spilled out onto the grounds calling for lawmakers to do their jobs, protect their constituents and pass a responsible, sustainable budget that properly funds state services and state workers' retirement systems. (See story below on Illinois' pension funding woes.)

Later in the day, Labor leaders met with Governor Quinn at the Illinois AFL-CIO to discuss the dire need for job creation and new state revenue. One union leader reported over 4,000 of his members are currently unemployed. The Governor said the Capital Bill signed last year is beginning to create jobs and he pointed to the additional jobs at the Ford plant in Chicago as well as green jobs being created as promising, however, he agreed that additional state revenue in the form of new taxes is needed.

Also in the Capitol this week to lobby lawmakers were members of the Machinists' and Plumbers' unions.



*Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael T. Carrigan speaks to the Illinois State Council of Machinists on Wednesday in Springfield. Seated next to him are Carl Gallman, IAM State Council president and Phil Gruber, IAM International vice president.*

### Illinois Ranks Last in US on Pension Funding

A report released this week from *The Pew Center on the States* shows Illinois is last among all 50 states in funding its employee retirement systems.

The report, *“The Trillion Dollar Gap – Underfunded State Retirement Systems and the Road to Reform,”* shows most states have funding inadequacies but Illinois is notably at the bottom of the list, with only 54 percent of the state's pension liability funded. That figure, the report says, is well below the 80 percent benchmark that the U.S. Government Accountability Office recommends.

Illinois' total unfunded pension liability is now \$54.4 billion. Each year since 2005, the state has paid less than 60 percent of its required contribution into the fund while state employees have consistently fully paid their share. The report also shows the state has set aside less than one percent of the total \$40 billion required to cover the long-term cost of retiree health care.

The report reiterates what unions have been saying for years, “Retirement benefits provide a reliable source of post-employment income for government workers, and they help public employers retain qualified personnel. For states that have not been disciplined about fulfilling their obligations, the financial pressure builds each year.”

To view the complete report go to [www.pewcenteronthestates.org](http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org).

