



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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

MICHAEL T. CARRIGAN, PRESIDENT

TIMOTHY E. DREA, SECRETARY TREASURER

JASON KELLER, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

The Illinois General Assembly will return to Springfield next Tuesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>. The House is scheduled to convene at noon on Tuesday, and the Senate at 12:30pm. As a reminder, next week is the Senate deadline to pass substantive senate bills out of committee by Friday, March 5<sup>th</sup>. The Senate is scheduled to remain in session from Tuesday through Friday, while the House is scheduled to be in session from Tuesday through Thursday. Both chambers were busy considering legislation in committees this week. Below are the bills that saw action that labor has been tracking.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY NEWS

### Governor Unveils Budget Outline This Week

Governor Quinn unveiled a preliminary budget outline to the General Assembly and public this week. A new law passed by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Quinn (PA 96-881) required the Governor to file a budget outline by February 24th, to allow two weeks of comments/suggestions from both General Assembly members and the public. Following the comment period, Governor Quinn will give his budget address to the General Assembly on March 10th.

It is estimated that Illinois' deficit will be approximately \$13 billion for FY11. According to the Governor's office, incoming revenue will drop approximately \$1.3 billion from FY10 to FY11. They also anticipate a large drop in federal stimulus funds. Illinois received approximately \$1.8 billion in federal stimulus funds in 2010, but should expect to see only \$429 million in 2011 if no further action is taken by Congress. Adding to the large deficit are the state's overdue pension payments. State auditors estimate that the pension system is underfunded by \$62 billion, which is statistically the worst in the nation.

Quinn's proposed budget will cut total spending by more than \$2 billion in the next fiscal year, which is lower than it has been in four years at \$24.2 billion. These cuts would include:

- \$1.3 billion less in education spending from the decrease in federal stimulus funds;
- \$386 million less in human service funding;
- \$69 million less in public safety funding – state police and prison guards.

#### **HB 4649 – Alternative Method for ICC Approval of Electric Transmission Lines**

Rep. Reitz (D – Sparta)  
Sen. Haine (D – Alton)

##### **SUPPORT**

Under current law, public utilities must obtain approval from the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) to construct any transmission line that has a voltage rating of 100kV or more and is longer than one mile. This legislation will retain the traditional transmission line approval process, but would also provide an alternative procedure for transmission line approval that would require:

- the ICC to expedite its decision within 120 days of the filing;
- the public utility seeking approval of a transmission line to pay a \$100,000 application fee with each filing to fund additional ICC resources needed to implement the expedited process;

- the public utility to satisfy the same criteria for obtaining approval of a transmission line that exists under the state's current laws and regulations; and

- require the public utility to pay to each county in which the transmission line is constructed a one-time construction fee of \$20,000 per mile of transmission line constructed in that county.

*2/24/10 – Passed House 108-0-0.*

*Referred to Senate Assignments.*

#### **HB 4654 – Senior Citizens Ride for Free on Mass Transit**

Rep. Bassi (R – Palatine)  
Leader Radogno (R – Lemont)

##### **Monitor**

Requires that seniors must be aged 65 or older, and be eligible for benefits under the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Act, to receive free mass transit service. Provides that the requirement must be imposed no

later than 180 days after becoming law.  
*2/24/10 – Passed House 83-27-3.*

*Referred to Senate Assignments.*

#### **HB 4820 – School Bus Driver Records**

Rep. William Davis (D – Chicago)

##### **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 (rather than driving while intoxicated).

*2/24/10 – Passed Vehicles & Safety Committee 7-0-0. Second Reading.*

*(continued on next page)*

(continued)

**HB 4873 – School and Commercial Bus Permits**

Rep. William Davis (D – Chicago)

**Monitor**

Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code. Adds several 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.

*2/24/10 – Passed Vehicles & Safety Committee 7-0-0. Second Reading.*

**HB 5120 – School Bus Drivers**

Rep. Rose (R – Charleston)

**Monitor**

Provides that a school bus must contain either an operating cellular radio telecommunication device (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 and 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.

*2/25/10 – Passed House 108-0-0.*

*Referred to Senate Assignments.*

**HB 5247 – Day Laborers**

Rep. Mendoza (D – Chicago)

**Monitor**

Amends the Day and Temporary Labor Services Act. Requires a business client of a day labor agency to pay wages and related taxes for services provided by that laborer that is referred to the client. The client shall abide by the payment terms outlined in invoices, service agreements, or stated terms provided by the day labor agency. Allows for a right of action for the day labor agency if a client violates this provision. Effective immediately.

*2/24/10 – Passed Labor Committee 24-0-0. Second Reading.*

**HB 5458 – Public Employees**

Rep. Franks (D – Woodstock)

**Monitor**

Amends the Public Employee Disability Act. When a third party may be liable for the public employee's disability, provides that the State has the same rights it has under the Workers' Compensation Act to pursue payment

or reimbursement of benefits it is obligated to pay under the Public Employees Disability Act.

*2/24/10 – Passed House Labor Committee 24-0-0. Second Reading.*

**HB 5712 – Railroad Track Equipment**

Rep. Nekritz (D – Des Plaines)

**SUPPORT**

Amends the Illinois Vehicle Code. Defines "railroad track equipment" as all vehicles operated upon rails for the purpose of the maintenance of railroads including, but not limited to, all hi-rail vehicles and on-track roadway maintenance machines. In provisions of the Illinois Vehicle Code concerning approaching trains, provides that approaching railroad track equipment shall be treated the same as approaching trains.

*2/24/10 – Passed Vehicles & Safety Committee 6-0-0. Second Reading.*

**HB 5820 – Election Nomination**

Rep. Lang (D – Skokie)

**Monitor**

Provides that candidates for Governor and Lieutenant Governor must run together as a team in a primary election.

*2/23/10 – Passed Elections & Campaign Reform 6-3-0. Second Reading.*

**HJR 101 – McPier Exposition Task Force**

Speaker Madigan (D – Chicago)

President Cullerton (D – Chicago)

**Monitor**

Creates the Joint Committee on the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority to examine and recommend ways to improve the Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority's operational stability and profitability. The task force will consist of sixteen General Assembly members, chaired by Speaker Madigan and Senate President Cullerton. The task force shall report back to the General Assembly by April 30, 2010.

*2/24/10 – Passed House 113-0-0.*

*2/25/10 – Approved by Senate Committee on Assignments. To Senate floor.*

**HJRCA 50 – Abolish Office of Lieutenant Governor**

Speaker Madigan (D – Chicago)

**Monitor**

Proposes to amend the Executive Arti-

cle of the Illinois Constitution. Eliminates the office of Lieutenant Governor, beginning with the term of office otherwise commencing in 2015. This measure would need to be passed by referendum.

*2/24/10 – Passed House Executive Committee 8-0-3. Second Reading.*

**HR 949 – Kal Lester Retirement**

Rep. Schmitz (R – Geneva)

**SUPPORT**

Congratulates Kevin "Kal" Lester, long-time Operating Engineer #150 member, on his retirement this week. Kal served as President of the Fox County Building Trades, and has been lobbying in Springfield for several years. The Illinois AFL-CIO congratulates Kal on his retirement and thanks him for his years of service for working families in Illinois. We wish you the best!

*2/24/10 – Resolution adopted in House.*

**SB 355 – Primary Election Date Change**

Sen. Demuzio (D – Carlinville)

Rep. Nekritz (D – Des Plaines)

**Monitor**

Changes the general primary election from the first Tuesday in February of even-numbered years to the third Tuesday in March of even-numbered years.

*2/24/10 – Passed the Senate 54-0-0.*

*3/3/10 – House Elections Committee 2pm, Rm 122B.*

**SB 2615 - Community College Borrowing Authorization**

Sen. Forby (D - Benton)

**SUPPORT**

Provides authorization for public community colleges to borrow money in anticipation of receiving payments from the State of Illinois. Provides a timetable by which the money shall be paid back.

*2/23/10 – Passed Senate Higher Education 8-0-0. Third Reading.*



## Illinois Workers to Join “KEEP IT MADE IN AMERICA” Rally in Evansville

On Friday, thousands of energized union members from a tri-state area will join national AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka at a rally in front of the Whirlpool plant in Evansville to protest the company’s plan to close it down and move 1,100 good-paying jobs to Mexico.

“Once again, Whirlpool, a profitable American company is absconding with our jobs and throwing their employees out in the cold,” said Michael T. Carrigan, president of the Illinois AFL-CIO. “Where once workers earned decent wages and could provide for their children and pay their taxes, now many can’t find jobs or work for much less. America’s manufacturing base that built the middle class is all but gone. These closures have to stop or our economy will never recover.

It’s time to put people above corporate greed.”

On Friday, a bus and car caravan carrying union members from across Southern Illinois will join others for a rally at 3:00 p.m. in front of the Evansville Whirlpool plant.

### FEDERAL NEWS

#### Senate Passes Jobs Bill

On Wednesday, the Senate passed a scaled-down \$15 billion jobs bill that AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka called “a first step to put Main Street back to work.”

Last December, the House passed a much larger job-creation package that included parts of the Senate bill.

“We need much bigger and bolder actions to ensure that we create 10 million jobs and that Wall Street pays the bill to fix the financial disaster,” said Trumka. “Moving forward, we will be taking the fight for jobs to communities nationwide, focusing on the solutions we have outlined in our ‘5 Points’ jobs plan. Those include extending unemployment benefits, food assistance and health benefits; rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure and investing in green jobs; increasing aid to state and local governments; increasing funding for neglected communities; and using TARP money to get credit flowing to small business.”

At the heart of the Senate bill is a tax credit for employers who hire new workers and small-business tax credits for up to \$250,000 in capital expenditures. It also extends federal subsidies for state road and bridge repairs.

The House must now act on the bill.

#### House Moves to End Anti-Trust Exemption for Health Insurers

On Wednesday, the House voted overwhelmingly to repeal the health insurance industry’s exemption from US anti-trust laws. Only two industries in American are exempt from anti-competition laws – the health insurance industry and Major League Baseball.

The legislation – HR 4626 – amends the McCarran-Ferguson Act that allows anti-trust exemptions for insurers.

Anti-trust laws prohibit practices that restrain trade like price fixing, bid rigging, corporate mergers likely to reduce market competition and predatory acts designed to create or sustain a monopoly.

If the legislation becomes law, it could likely affect Illinois consumers as currently two insurers own 69 percent of the market here.

The vote was 406-19. All nineteen Illinois Congressmen and women voted for the measure. It now goes to the Senate.

#### Congress Votes on Unemployment Extension and Halt to Medicare Cuts

Current federal unemployment benefits are set to expire this Sunday. The U.S. Senate sought to pass the short term extensions by unanimous consent on Thursday, but Republican Senator Jim Bunning (R – KY) objected to the motion. Senator Bunning complained he had been ambushed by the Democrats and was forced to miss the Kentucky-South Carolina basketball game because this legislation was being debated on the Senate floor at the same time of the game.

Bunning objected under a Senate rule that allows any single lawmaker to prevent a bill from coming to a vote. Lawmakers can eventually overcome those objections with 60 votes, though the process takes several days. Democrats predicted the bill would be overwhelmingly approved next week.

The U.S. Senate will adjourn Friday morning. There's no agreement yet for a vote on the package, and it's unclear what

exactly the Senate will be voting on next week.

The U.S. House passed a \$10 billion plan to provide a one-month extension of unemployment benefits, including federal subsidies to help the jobless buy health insurance. The bill was approved by voice vote.

The bill approved by the House would prevent a 21 percent cut in Medicare payments to doctors that would otherwise be imposed by a budget mechanism created by Congress more than a decade ago. Congress routinely blocks the payment reduction.

The jobless can currently buy health insurance through their former employers for 18 months under a law known as Cobra. The government currently pays 65 percent of the tab. The bill would have extended federal subsidies to help pay health premiums for people who have lost health insurance along with their jobs.

