



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

PUBLISHED FOR LABOR ACTIVISTS BY THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO

MICHAEL T. CARRIGAN, PRESIDENT

TIMOTHY E. DREA, SECRETARY TREASURER

JASON KELLER, LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Governor Proposes Sharp Cuts to State Programs



Education Hardest Hit, Challenges GA to pass Tax Hike

Wednesday in his budget address, Gov. Quinn outlined major cuts to state spending that will affect Illinoisans of all ages. But the largest share of proposed cuts will be to education funding. The Governor is recom-

state workers to take major cuts including additional furlough days and \$300 million in cuts to their pension programs.

The Governor is also proposing the state borrow \$4.7 billion over a ten-year period and again defer payments to vendors and service providers. The state already owes over \$5 billion in unpaid bills.

Gov. Quinn said without additional revenues his proposed cuts were necessary. He then challenged lawmakers to "take a wise, alternative path" and pass a one percent income tax increase that would help restore the education cuts.

"The solution to our state's financial problems is clear," said Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael T. Carrigan. "We need new, sustainable revenue now to fund all state programs. That can only come in the form of a tax increase. If our legislators are not willing to take that vote...difficult as it may be...then our entire state will suffer and falter. I think the Governor made that clear today."

According to fact sheets provided by the Governor's Office of Management and Budget, the Illinois Department of Labor and Labor Relations Board will see no decrease in staff for FY11. The Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board will see an increase in staff by three people for FY11.

A report released Monday from *The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities* shows that other states are raising taxes to offset budget shortfalls. Since 2008, 33 states have increased taxes. Seventeen states raised their sales tax and 11 states raised income tax. (To see the full report go to www.cbpp.org.)

ommending a whopping \$1.3 billion in cuts to education programs that could result in 17,000 layoffs.

"The governor's Fiscal Year 2011 budget's proposed... cut to education funding at all levels would put Illinois, already 49th of the 50 states in education funding, in a free fall race to the bottom," said Ed Geppert, Jr., president of the Illinois Federation of Teachers.

In his "Five Pillars of Recovery" platform, the Governor said it would take creating jobs, cutting costs, borrowing, federal assistance and increased state revenue to solve the states financial crisis. The state currently has a \$13 billion deficit and revenue funds for fiscal year 2011 are predicted to go down for the third consecutive year.

Gov. Quinn recommended cutting \$325 million in healthcare benefits and \$276 million in human services which would hit retired workers on fixed incomes hard. He will ask

Lobbyist Registration Begins Monday

Lobbyist registration for 2010 will open on March 15, 2010. Registrations that are filed by March 31, 2010 shall be deemed retroactive to January 1, 2010. Lobbying entities that register after that date are deemed registered on the actual date of registration.

To electronically register a lobbying entity and the lobbyist(s) for that entity under the Illinois Lobbyist Registration Act (25 ILCS 170) the authorized agent or designee for the entity will need to visit: www.ilsos.gov/lobbyistweb/. A User Name and Password is needed to enter the registration site.

Due to pending litigation, the Secretary of State is not collecting registration fees at the time of registration. Once fees are established by the legislature and approved by the Governor, registrants will receive a billing notice from the Secretary of State's office. Lobbying entities will be required to pay the fee within 30 days from the date of the notice. The registration of any entity that fails to pay the fees by the due date will be terminated. If terminated, the registrant may not conduct lobbying activities until all fees are paid and the lobbyist registration is reinstated.

The filing of expenditure reports will remain on hold pending possible court action. The effective date and method for filing lobbyist expenditure reports will be announced by the Secretary of State at a later date.

After registration, lobbyists will receive information on obtaining a 2010 Lobbyist Identification Card.



Unemployment Rises in Illinois

The latest unemployment rates for January were released by the U.S. Department of Labor last Tuesday. Nationally the rate remained unchanged at 9.7 percent, but Illinois' jobless rate rose to 11.3 percent from 11.1 percent, according to the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY NEWS

Last Week *the General Assembly returned to Springfield for four days. March 12th was the deadline for passing substantive House bills out of committee. In addition to committee action in the House, many bills were passed out of the House and to the Senate. The Senate concentrated on passing bills out of the chamber to the House and making last minute amendments to bills.*

This Week *the Senate will return Monday and the House on Tuesday. Both chambers are scheduled to remain in session through Friday. Friday, March 19th is the 3rd Reading deadline to pass substantive Senate bills out of the Senate. The following is a synopsis of action taken on bills this week that are important to working families. For a full view of legislation we continue to monitor, please visit: www.ilaf-cio.org/laborbills.htm.*

HB 4797 – Wind Farms

Rep. Mautino (D – Spring Valley)

SUPPORT

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

3/11/10 – Passed House Revenue 11-0-0. Second Reading.

HB 4872 – Grace Period Voting/Registration at Public University

Rep. Golar (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Amends the Election Code. Requires election authorities to conduct grace period registration, and early voting at a central location on the main campus of each public university in the State.

3/9/10 – Passed Elections & Campaign Reform 5-2-0. Second Reading.

HB 4886 – Four Day School Week

Rep. Black (D – Danville)

Monitor

Amends the School Code. Provides that a school district may, by board resolution, adopt an alternative school calendar for a 4-day school week, which must be approved by the State Board of Education. Sets forth requirements that provide a minimum of at least 150 days to ensure 141 of actual pupil attendance.

3/10/10 – Passed House Elementary & Secondary Education 19-0-0. Second Reading.

HB 5154 - FOIA Trailer Bill

Rep. Chapa LaVia (D - Aurora)

Sen. Lightford (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Amends the Personnel Record Review

Act. Prohibits the disclosure of public employee performance evaluations under the Freedom of Information Act.

3/11/10 – Passed House 70-39-0.

Referred to Senate Assignments.

HB 5458 – Public Employees

Rep. Franks (D – Woodstock)

Sen. Demuzio (D – Carlinville)

Monitor

Allows the State to pursue payment or reimbursement under the Workers Compensation Act against a 3rd Party that is liable for a public employee's injury or disability.

3/12/10 – Passed House 112-0-0.

Referred to Senate Assignments.

HB 5473 – Insurance Appeals Process

Rep. Flowers (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Accident health insurance or managed care plans shall establish and maintain an appeals procedure related to the denial of health care benefits.

3/9/10 – Passed Health Care Availability & Accessibility 7-5-0. Second Reading.

HB 5513 – Sprinklerfitters

Rep. Rita (D – Blue Island)

Neutral

Amends the Criminal Code of 1961. Provides that a person is guilty of identity theft when applying for a building permit and uses a license number of a fire sprinkler contractor that the applicant knows will not be doing work on the project. Class 4 felony.

3/10/10 – Passed Business & Occupational Licenses Committee 13-0-0.

Second Reading.

HB 5664 – Fraternity/Sorority Housing Fire Safety

Rep. Burke (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Creates the Greek Housing Fire Safety Act. Fire sprinklers are required in the construction of new fraternity or sorority houses on an university/college campus after January 1, 2011, and all fraternity and sorority houses in the state by January 1, 2019.

3/12/10 – Passed House 97-4-2.

Referred to Senate Rules.

HB 5668 – Firefighters

Rep. Dugan (D – Kankakee)

Sen. Hutchinson (D – Chicago Heights)

SUPPORT

Amends the Firemen's Disciplinary Act. Adds to the definition of "fireman" a person who is a paramedic employed in a unit of local government and an EMT employed in a unit of local government. Effective immediately.

3/12/10 – Passed House 86-15-1.

Referred to Senate Assignments.

HB 5712 – Railroad Track Equipment

Rep. Nekritz (D – Des Plaines)

SUPPORT

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

3/2/10 – Passed House 102-0-0.

Referred to Senate Assignments.

(continued on next page)

(continued)

HB 5787 – Firefighters

Rep. Smith (D – Peoria)

SUPPORT

Amends the Illinois Municipal Code and the Fire Protection District Act. Sets forth alternative procedures for appointments to full-time fire departments. Provides for the creation of a register of eligibles for original appointments to fire departments. Sets forth the requirements for placement on the register of eligibles. Provides that a local commission may also hire from a statewide master register of eligibles for original appointments

3/11/10 – Passed Cities & Villages 6-2-0. Second Reading.

HB 5820 – Election Nomination

Rep. Lang (D – Skokie)

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. Referred to Senate Assignments.

HB 6073 – School Bus Communication

Rep. Fritchey (D – Chicago)

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.

3/10/10 – Passed Vehicles & Safety Committee 6-0-0. Second Reading.

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.

3/10/10 – Passed House 114-1-1.

3/12/10 – Sent to Governor, (60 days) to take action.

SB 1425 – Medicaid Borrowing

Sen. Trotter (D – Chicago)

Rep. Chapa LaVia (D – Aurora)

Monitor

Allows the state to borrow \$250 million to pay Medicaid expenses, which will allow the State to become eligible for \$400 million in federal matching reimbursement funds.

3/4/10 – Passed Senate 36-20-0.

Passed both Chambers.

3/11/10 – Signed by Governor, PA 96-0885.

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.

Referred to House Rules.

SB 3291 – Agencies

Sen. Koehler (D – Peoria)

Rep. Graham (D – Oak Park)

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.

Referred to House Rules.

SR 560 - Racial Bias in Suspensions & Expulsions

Sen. Lightford (D - Chicago)

SUPPORT

Creates the Task Force on Eliminating Racial Bias in Suspensions and Expulsions to examine the causes of the racial gap in suspension and expulsion rates and submit a report to the General Assembly by April 15, 2010.

3/11/10 – Passed Senate 53-0-0.

NATIONAL NEWS

Legislation to Extend Unemployment Passes Senate

On Wednesday, the U.S. Senate passed a bill to extend the filing deadline for unemployment and COBRA health insurance benefits until the end of the year. It's estimated nearly 15 million Americans are actively looking for work.

The bill also provides \$25 billion in funding for state Medicaid programs and extends two Recovery Act Provisions for small business.

The bill passed 62-36. (56 Democrats, including Senators Durbin and Burriss, and 6 Republicans voted for the bill.) It now goes to the House. In December, the House passed a \$154 billion job creation bill that included an unemployment extension along with other initiatives to help spur the economy, but the Senate chose to consider the measures separately. If the House passes the Senate version it will go to the President to sign. However, it is most likely that a conference committee will be formed to work out differences between the House and Senate versions.