



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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

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The Illinois General Assembly concluded their business on Thursday. Only the Illinois House will return next week, on Tuesday, February 22 at noon. Next Thursday, February 24, is the House deadline for introduction of new bills. The Senate is taking a break for the consolidated primary election on February 22. The Senate will return on March 1.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Governor Quinn Unveils Budget Blueprint

Governor Quinn addressed a joint session of the General Assembly on Wednesday this week, to outline his FY12 budget proposal. The governor reported that Illinois has \$8.7 billion in overdue bills, and that the state pays its bills six to eight months behind schedule. This debt is still there, despite the fact that legislators passed and Quinn approved an income tax increase in January.

One of the key components of Quinn's address was his debt restructuring plan. Senate President Cullerton has introduced SB 3, which would bond/borrow the \$8.7 billion to pay off the overdue bills. In doing so, it would infuse the Illinois economy immediately with \$8.7 billion, and allow the state to slowly pay off the bonds. Lawmakers who oppose borrowing to pay overdue bills will in effect be supporting teacher layoffs, additional cuts to fire and police personnel and cuts to frontline state services.

Another idea proposed by Quinn was to reduce the number of school districts in Illinois from 869 to no more than 300. This could potentially free up additional funding for education. In addition,

Quinn indicated that he would like to increase funding for the monetary assistance program, which provides scholarships for qualified needy students, with a particular focus on community college students.

The new budget proposal from Gov. Pat Quinn calls for hiring hundreds of new state employees. An analysis by House Democrats puts the increase at 945. That's a bump of only 1.7%.

The Corrections Department would see the largest increase in new workers - 187. The Quinn administration says it will actually save money by cutting overtime costs. The Transportation Department would get 150 employees, 101 at the Department of Public Health, and 97 at Veterans Affairs.



#### **HB 111 – PAYGO Budgeting**

Rep. Unes (R – Pekin)

##### **OPPOSE**

Requires PAYGO budgeting. Provides that if a law requires additional spending from State funds, then the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability must certify to the State Comptroller that adequate revenues are available. Effective immediately.

*2/16/11 – Passed House State Government 14-0-0. Second Reading.*

#### **HB 267 – RTA Funds**

Rep. Franks (D – Woodstock)

##### **OPPOSE**

Amends the Counties Code. Provides that Cook and collar counties may opt out of the .25% tax increase imposed under PA 95-708 (HB 656 95<sup>th</sup> GA). PA 95-708 increased Chicago-area sales tax .25% to fund mass transit. HB 267 exempts taxes that are pledged to repay

bonds or other long-term debt. Effective immediately.

*2/17/11 – Passed House Mass Transit 14-10. Second Reading.*

#### **SB 1 – Executive Appointments**

President Cullerton (D – Chicago)

Speaker Madigan (D – Chicago)

##### **Monitor**

This legislation would eliminate all gubernatorial appointees on hold-over, meaning their term has expired, yet they continue to serve in the same capacity because no one has been appointed to take their place. According to Senate staff, there are currently 599 holdover positions. This legislation has an immediate effective date. All salaried positions would cease immediately upon this legislation becoming law. Non-salaried positions would be given 30 days to vacate position upon this bill becoming law. For those whose term

will become "held over", they will have 30 days after term expires.

*2/10/11 – Passed Senate 48-0-0.*

*2/17/11 – Passed House 103-6-1.*

*To Governor's Desk.*

#### **SB 4 – Edge Tax Credit**

Sen. Forby (D – Benton)

Rep. Bradley (D – Marion)

##### **Neutral**

This legislation allows Continent Tire, based in Mount Vernon, to apply for a tax credit that would be used for a \$200 million investment and the creation of 350 jobs and retaining 250 full time jobs. The investment will be used for an expansion of their existing facility.

*2/17/11 – Passed the Senate 50-0-0.*

*2/17/11 – Referred to House Rules*

*(Continued on page 2)*

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY** (Continued)**SB 38 – Rainwater/Plumbing Code**

Sen. Garret (D – Highwood)

**Neutral**

Amends the Illinois Plumbing License Law. Provides that “plumbing” includes rainwater harvesting distribution systems, but does not include any rainwater harvesting distribution system or rainwater harvesting collection system unless otherwise required by the Illinois Plumbing Code. Requires the Illinois Department of Public Health to adopt and publish a minimum code of standards for rainwater harvesting collection systems and rainwater harvesting distribution systems by January 1, 2012.

**2/17/11 – Passed Senate 49-0-0.****Arrived in House.****SB 115 – Equal Pay Act**

Sen. Sandoval (D – Cicero)

**SUPPORT**

Amends the Equal Pay Act of 2003. Increases the civil penalty up to \$5,000 for a violation of the Equal Pay Act.

**2/16/11 – Passed Senate Labor 6-3-0. Second Reading.****SJRCA 13 – Abolish Office of Comptroller and Treasurer**

Sen. Raoul (D – Chicago)

**Monitor**

Proposes to amend the Executive Article of the Illinois Constitution. Eliminates the Offices of the Comptroller and Treasurer. Creates the office of Comptroller of the Treasury. Provides that the Comptroller of the Treasury shall be assigned the duties of the office of Treasurer and Comptroller. No Comptroller or Treasurer shall be elected in 2014 and thereafter. *(In order for this to become part of Illinois’ constitution, both chambers of the General Assembly would have to approve it by 3/5 majority, and it would then be placed on the ballot for the 2012 election. If either 3/5 of those voting on the question or a majority of those voting in the election approve the question, it becomes part of the constitution).*

**2/16/11 – Passed Senate Executive Committee 15-0-0. Third Reading.** ■**Governor Signs 96<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Bills****HB 5424 – Collective Bargaining and Grants**

Speaker Madigan (D – Chicago)

Sen. Kotowski (D – Park Ridge)

**OPPOSE**

Terminates collective bargaining agreements between a State Constitutional Officer and a labor organization on June 30<sup>th</sup> of the year the State Constitutional Officer is sworn into office. Prohibits any collectively bargained salary increases or benefit increases starting on or after the first day of the term of office from going into effect. Sets forth budget requirements and creates a commission to advise the governor on budgeting outcome and goals. Statutorily provides the General Assembly with duplicative oversight on grant making authority of the agencies.

**1/6/11 – Passed Senate 30-10-3.****1/7/11 – Passed House 102-11-3.****2/16/11 – Signed by Governor, PA 96-1529****SB 3778 – Free Rides for Seniors**

Sen. Trotter (D – Chicago)

Rep. Currie (D – Chicago)

**Monitor**

This legislation follows the passage of HB 656 in 2008, which Governor Blagojevich Amendatorily Vetoed to allow free rides on public transit for seniors in the state. SB 3778, will eliminate free rides for some senior citizens. Those making below \$27,610 as a single person will be eligible for free rides; below \$36,635 for a family of two; and \$45,657 for a family of three.

**2/14/11 – Signed by Governor, PA 96-1527.****EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS***The following appointments were confirmed by the Senate this week:*

- AM 2 – **Michael McRaith** to the Illinois Department of Insurance.
- AM 7 – **Gary Hannig** to the Illinois Department of Transportation.
- AM 8 – **Julie Hamos** to the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services.

*New appointments:*

- AM 24 – **Thomas Tyrell** to the Illinois Workers’ Compensation Commission.
- AM 25 – **Michael Joyce** to the Illinois Labor Relations Board - Local Panel.

**Governor’s Office Calls Meetings on Workers’ Compensation and Unemployment Insurance**

Affiliates of the Illinois AFL-CIO and business leaders have been asked by the Governor’s office to discuss the issues of workers’ compensation and unemployment insurance. Jerry Stermer, senior advisor to Governor Quinn, is mediating the discussions along with members from each legislative caucus.

On Thursday, it was agreed by the Governor and legislative leaders that consideration of legislation on unemployment insurance would go through the “agreed bill process” meaning that legislators would be asked to hold their bills on unemployment and instead have them considered as part of the agreed bill process. Senator Terry Link, Senator John O. Jones, Representative Ed Sullivan and Representative Frank Mautino will represent their respective caucus during the negotiations.

On Thursday, February 10, a meeting was convened by the Governor’s office to

discuss changes to the Workers’ Compensation Act. The Governor’s office called the meeting a fact finding summit and invited labor leaders, business groups and representatives of medical providers to state their position on potential changes to the Act. Senator Kwame Raoul, Senate Republican Leader Christine Radogno, Representative Dan Brady and Representative John Bradley represented their respective caucus during the meeting.

During the closing days of the 96th General Assembly in January, attempts were made to make significant changes to the Workers’ Compensation Act without going through the time honored agreed bill process. In last week’s meeting, business leaders stated that they were committed to introducing and passing legislation on workers’ compensation outside of the agreed bill process in the 97th General Assembly. ■



## Former Chicago-Cook County Building Trades Officer Dies

Bernard "Bernie" Spatz, a 50-year member and past president of Glaziers Local 27 passed away on February 10. He was 72. Bernie was secretary-treasurer of the Chicago and Cook County Building and Construction Trades Council for nine years, serving from 1995 until his retirement in 2004. Prior to his time with the Council, Bernie served 16 years as Local 27 president and business manager. He served as president of the International Conference of Glaziers and Glassworkers, president of the Greater Chicago and Vicinity Port Council Maritime Trades and as a board member of the Illinois International Port Authority of Chicago, Illinois Clean and Beautiful and the Illinois Economic Development Board. Bernie was married to his wife Janet for 50 years. They have six children and 11 grandchildren. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, the Chicago City Council will introduce a resolution

honoring Bernie's work on behalf of Chicago's working families and his contributions to the City.

Memorials may be made to: *DAD'S Day (Dollars Against Diabetes) c/o Chicago Building Trade, 150 N. Wacker Drive, Suite 1850, Chicago, IL 60606.*

## NATIONAL

### 30,000 Descend on Wisconsin Capitol

"Freedom! Democracy! Unions!" were the cries of an estimated 30,000 people at the Wisconsin state capitol opposing Republican Gov. Scott Walker's attempt to strip public employees of their bargaining rights. Three days of massive rallies, 15 school systems closed as teachers march on the capitol, including Madison's affecting 24,000 children; the Archbishop & Chancellor of UM both put out letters supporting the workers as did Green Bay Packers players; President Obama weighed in saying it looks like just an attack on workers; Education Secretary Duncan said he's concerned about attacks on teachers and will call Gov. Walker; and finally, Democratic senators left the state Thursday to prevent a vote on the measure.

National media coverage of the Wisconsin protest has raised awareness of Republican-planned attempts to crush unions and workers' rights. Rachel Maddow, MSNBC, summarized the situation on her program Thursday night by saying "this is a Democrat vs Republican issue." She posted charts of campaign contributions for the last two national elections that showed the only large donors giving to Democrats were labor unions. She surmised that the Republican Party could eliminate those large donations by enacting state laws to minimize unions.

Richard Trumka is expected to be in Wisconsin today. The national AFL-CIO has engaged their Illinois E-Activist list to encourage Illinois workers to join the Wisconsin battle in solidarity.

For latest developments and information please visit: <http://wisafclcio.typepad.com/>



#### Thousands Rally Into the Night

As the temperature dropped and fog rolled in on Madison working families did not back down. Thousands were still gathered on the steps of the Capitol building in an unprecedented show of solidarity to protect Wisconsin's Middle Class. (Courtesy of Wisconsin AFL-CIO)

### John Sweeney Awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom

On Tuesday, AFL-CIO President Emeritus John Sweeney received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor from President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. Sweeney served as president of the national labor federation from 1995 – 2009 and transformed the labor movement into a voice for all working Americans. He was one of 15 recipients.