



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

APRIL 29, 2011

PUBLISHED FOR LABOR ACTIVISTS BY THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO

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The Illinois General Assembly concluded its business on Thursday this week. Both chambers will return on Tuesday, May 3. The Illinois General Assembly will consider many large issues in the month of May. These include the budget, pension reforms, workers' compensation reform, and collective bargaining rights for public employees. While we are grateful for your past support in making calls to legislative members and coming to Springfield to lobby, we may need to call upon labor members to mobilize and fight off anti-working family initiatives in the Capitol. We will continue to keep you up to date on all of these matters.

HOUSE PREPARES FOR FURTHER "PENSION REFORMS"

The Illinois House has scheduled a hearing for next week to vote on potentially devastating pension reforms. The hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, May 4 at 2pm in Room 118 of the Capitol. The legislation that is posted is House Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 5.

HJRCA 5 would require a 3/5 vote (now simple majority) of the General Assembly for any bill that authorized an increase in pension benefits for any state or municipal pension system. If a bill were to pass and the Governor vetoed that bill, it would mandate 2/3 vote to override that veto (now 3/5). In addition, it would require a 3/5 vote by a municipality or other public body to ratify pension benefit increases. Most wage/salary increases would trigger pension benefit increases, thus any union contract with a local public body would require a 3/5 vote of the municipal council. *(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).*

The Illinois AFL-CIO and its public employee unions remain steadfastly prepared to fiercely defend current public employee pension benefits. We anticipate a bill to be filed in

the very near future that would reduce current public employee pension benefits. While we do not know the details of the possible legislation yet, any attempt to reduce current benefits is egregious and unconstitutional. Since 1972, at least seven court cases have affirmed the meaning of Article XIII, Section 5 of the Illinois Constitution. In *Hannigan v. Hoffmeister*: "a Pension Code modification changing the basis upon which pension benefits are directly determined cannot be applied to diminish the benefits of those who become members of the system prior to the statute's effective date". (Source: IFT Fact Sheet)

The Illinois AFL-CIO is requesting your assistance in contacting any and all legislators in the House and Senate to tell them to oppose HJRCA 5 and any further legislation that would reduce pension benefits for current employees. The last "pension reform" package passed by the General Assembly in less than 24 hours, so time is of the essence.

Legislators have a moral responsibility to oppose any reduction in pension benefits for current employees. Legislators would not break into an elderly individual's home and steal groceries and medicine would they? Well, if they vote for benefit reductions that is what they are doing, they're just doing it from the Capitol. ■

S T A T E

WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVED STATEWIDE



Yesterday, union members and their families and friends joined together to honor workers who have been killed or injured on the job and to call for more stringent worker safety laws and funding. There were 10 Workers' Memorial Day events planned around the state in Alton, Bloomington, Decatur, Galesburg, Joliet, Peoria, Quad Cities, Rockford, Springfield and Spring Valley. *(Pictured left to right at the Springfield service held at the Illinois State Library are Illinois AFL-CIO Political Director Bill Looby, AFFI Color Guard members Carl Hinman, Christy Long and Alan Reyne, and Springfield and Central Illinois Trades and Labor Council President Terry Reed (IFT)).* ■

Call 217.544.4014 For More Information On These And Other Legislative Issues Important To Working People - www.ilaff-cio.org



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Speaker Madigan Invites Labor For Meeting On Work Comp

Speaker Michael Madigan called a meeting and invited individuals from labor that have workers compensation expertise from around the state to discuss workers' compensation issues. The meeting took place on Wednesday morning. Senate President John Cullerton was present as well.

The Speaker shared his thoughts on workers compensation and what he

thought should be included in any future legislation. President Michael Carrigan and those present from labor gave feedback on what components in the workers' compensation system are necessary for working families in Illinois. President Carrigan also called for the leaders to bring back the "agreed bill process" for workers' compensation.

Speaker Madigan will be meeting

with representatives from the business community regarding workers' compensation next week. The Illinois Chamber was a part of the 2005 workers' compensation agreed bill process. Shortly after leaving the negotiating table from a bill they helped put together, the chamber began complaining about the workers' compensation system. ■

Redistricting Discussions Heat Up

House and Senate committees have been holding public meetings throughout the state to take testimony on the upcoming redrawing of congressional, Senate and House districts in Illinois.

Testimony has been taken from neighborhood organizations, minority groups and civic leaders as legislators grapple with the task of redrawing representative boundaries based on changes in the 2010 Census. Senate districts will increase to approximately 217,000 people per district. House districts will increase to 108,000 per district. Illinois loses one congressional seat due to slower population growth that some other states. Congress has a set number of 435 seats that are reapportioned every 10 years. Those states growing faster in population gain seats. States in the south and west experienced an increase in congressional seats.

Hispanic population growth has exploded, representing 32.8 percent growth in the last 10 years. Hispanics represent 15.8 percent of the total population.

Leading Hispanic groups such as the Mexican American Legal Defense Foundation (MALDEF) and the Latino Policy Forum have created maps to reflect the growing Hispanic population in Illinois. Other groups representing diversity of the state have testified as to factoring in their communities of interest.

The census data for Illinois shows that the five most populous incorporated places are Chicago, 2,695,598; Aurora, 197,899; Rockford, 152,871; Joliet, 147,433; and Naperville, 141,853. Chicago decreased by 6.9 percent since the 2000 Census. Aurora grew by 38.4 percent, Rockford grew

by 1.8 percent, Joliet grew by 38.8 percent, and Naperville grew by 10.5 percent.

The largest county is Cook with a population of 5,194,675. Its population decreased by 3.4 percent since 2000. The other counties in the top five include DuPage, with a population of 916,924 (increase of 1.4 percent); Lake, 703,462 (increase of 9.2 percent); Will, 677,560 (increase of 34.9 percent); and Kane, 515,269 (increase of 27.5 percent).

Committee chairs Sen. Kwame Raoul and Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie have scheduled nearly 30 hearings up and down the state to take input on the map. Raoul has committed to holding two Senate hearings following the creation of the maps.

The adjournment date for the legislature is May 31. The maps can be passed through the General Assembly with simple majorities on or before May 31. Any votes taken June 1 or after would require a 3/5 vote in both chambers to pass. The Governor must sign any bill by June 30 to avoid a redistricting panel making the decision.

Important web sites for further information, including testimony, are:

<http://www.ilhousedems.com/redistricting/>

<http://www.ilsenateredistricting.com/>

Also, information on the committees can be found at <http://www.ilga.gov/> under House and Senate redistricting committees. ■

AM 73 – Warren Ribley

Sen. Munoz (D – Chicago)

Nominates Warren C. Ribley to be Director of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

5/5/11 – *Senate Executive Appointments Hearing, 8:30am, Rm 212 Capitol.*

HR 252 – Worker Memorial Day

Rep. Williams (D – Chicago)

SUPPORT

Declares April 28, 2011 as Workers' Memorial Day in the State of Illinois.

4/28/11 – *Passed House by a voice vote.*

Congress to Decide on Debt Ceiling

Congress will return from spring break on Monday and members are expected to begin debate on raising the nation's debt ceiling. The limit on how much the government can borrow currently stands at \$14.3 trillion. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), Government Accountability Office (GAO), and the Office of Management and Budget the government will reach that limit by this summer.

Created in 1974, the debt ceiling is the maximum amount of money that the government can borrow to issue payments for programs like Social Security, military salaries, Medicare benefits and tax refunds.

Republicans are expected to demand further federal budget cuts before agreeing to the raise debt limit. ■

Indiana Votes to Expand Private School Vouchers

On Wednesday, the GOP-led Indiana legislature approved the broadest private school voucher program in the nation. The bill, signed by Gov. Mitch Daniels, will allow 7,500 students to enroll the first year, 15,000 in the second, but within three years there will be no limit on the number of children who can enroll. The legislation also includes a tax deduction of \$1,000 for each child in a private school or home school. ■

President Obama "Strongly Disapproves" Of Attacks on Public Workers-

On Thursday, President Obama told Cleveland's WKYC TV that he strongly opposes attacks on public workers in Ohio, Wisconsin and elsewhere around the nation.

"Let's make sure that we've got shared sacrifice; we make sure that the burden doesn't just fall on one set of folks," said the President. "Let's certainly not blame public employees for a financial crisis that they had nothing to do with. And let's not use this as an excuse to erode their bargaining rights. Whether it's Wisconsin or what were seein' in Ohio, I strongly disapprove."

Doug Cunningham – WINS

Fire Fighters Stop Funds to Congressional Candidates

Focus on Anti-Worker State Battles

On Tuesday, International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) President Harold Schaitberger announced the union will stop donations to federal candidates and party committees and will instead focus its effort on fighting anti-collective bargaining rights battles at the state level.

"We are simply shutting down any contributions going to any federal candidates or to any federal PACs or committees until, quite frankly, our friends are willing to stand up and fight

on our behalf with the same kind of ferocity that our enemies and those that are literally trying to destroy us are doing on the other side," Schaitberger told USA TODAY.

According to a statement from Schaitberger, in the last election cycle, the IAFF FIREPAC was in the top 1.1 percent of the more than 7,100 federally registered PACs in terms of dollars raised and was the 10th largest PAC in candidate contributions. They spent nearly \$15 million to elect federal candidates. ■

4TH Annual

Illinois AFL-CIO COPE Golf Outing
Monday, June 6, 2011

Download Entry Form @ <http://www.ilaf-cio.org/docs/flyers/11GolfOuting.pdf>

Or Contact Terri Payne @ 217.544-4104

The RAIL Golf Course

1 p.m. - Shotgun Start

6 p.m. - Dinner