



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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The Illinois General Assembly completed their business today for the week. The Senate deadline for introduction of bills is today. The Senate will not return until Tuesday, March 3. The House will return next Wednesday, February 25. The deadline for introduction of House bills is Friday, February 27. We will continue to keep our affiliates abreast of important bill introductions.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Governor Rauner Gives Budget Address

More shared sacrifice for low income and middle class, while the wealthy are asked to do nothing

Governor Bruce Rauner addressed a joint session of the Illinois General Assembly on Wednesday to lay out his budget blue print for the coming fiscal year. His big plan to save the state is to cut services to the poor, middle class, and higher education across the board. In addition, he would like to force state employees to the second tier of pension benefits or into a private Wall Street account. His plan did not include any new revenue, or more importantly, closure of tax loop holes for businesses and the wealthy.

Governor Rauner may have been able to do these types of schemes when running a business, but he is now in charge of helping the people of Illinois, not making life more difficult. Millionaires are getting an average annual tax cut of \$37,000. We know there are many options for the state to generate revenue. To say that there is “no choice but to make cuts” is cynical and false.

Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan had this to say following the speech: “After more than a year, the citizens of this state finally heard from Gov. Rauner concerning our state’s financial challenges. It is clear he doesn’t have real solutions – relying on short-term money shuffling and gimmicks in an attempt to forestall more difficult decisions.

“He has spent much of his first few weeks on a right-wing, ideological binge, attempting to make his case slashing modest programs boosting injured and unemployed workers, dropping local wage and benefit standards, and attacking state workers and their unions. While this may be a political message he wants to send, it is not constructive in solving our state’s financial woes. These proposals do little to improve our state finances, but will certainly undermine middle class economic security.

“We have a revenue problem that needs to be addressed. The Center for Tax and Budget Accountability issued a report yesterday showing how the phase down of the personal income tax disproportionately benefits the highest income earners and creates more income inequality in Illinois.

“The Governor is also silent on the 70 percent of companies that pay no corporate income tax and \$2 billion in corporate tax breaks that cost our citizens each year. Now is the time for real solutions, not political rhetoric.”



Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael T. Carrigan and State Representative Mike Smiddy attend the budget address.



In other action this week:

- **HB 108** (Flowers) - Creates the Illinois Universal Health Care Act. Provides that all individuals residing in the State are covered under the Illinois Health Services Program for health insurance. Passed House Health Care Availability & Accessibility Committee 3-2-0. **Labor supports.**
- **HB 439** (Hoffman) - Requires a contract carrier transporting employees, including but not limited to railroad employees, to verify hit and run and uninsured motor vehicle coverage, as well as underinsured motor vehicle coverage in an amount not less than \$1,000,000 per passenger. Passed House Transportation: Vehicles 7-0. **Labor supports.**
- **SB 675** (Manar) - Creates the Springfield High Speed Railroad Oversight Act. Provides for the establishment of a diversity program to ensure environmental justice, local involvement, and non-discrimination in all contracts related to the High Speed Rail Project in the City of Springfield and Sangamon County. Sets forth requirements of the program. Establishes the Springfield High Speed Railroad Oversight Commission. Requires the Commission to submit quarterly reports to various state officers and agencies detailing the progress of the project. Passed House Commerce & Economic Development Committee 10-0-1. **Labor supports.**

The Senate confirmed several appointments this week:

- AM 980422 - Nominates Stephen Mathis to be a member of the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission.
- AM 980423 - Nominates Jessica Hegarty to be an Arbitrator for the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission.
- AM 980598 - Nominates Peter J. O'Brien, Sr. to be a member of the Capital Development Board.
- AM 980642 - Nominates Joann Frattiani-Atsaves to be an arbitrator for the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission.
- AM 980643 - Nominates David Kane to be an arbitrator for the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission.
- AM 980644 - Nominates Lynette Thompson-Smith to be an arbitrator for the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission.
- AM 980655 - Nominates Robert Falcioni to be an arbitrator for the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission.
- AM 980646 - Nominates Milton Black to be an arbitrator for the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission.
- AM 980647 - Nominates Anthony Erbacci to be an arbitrator for the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission.
- AM 980648 - Nominates Jennifer A. Burke to be a member of the Pollution Control Board.
- AM 980649 - Nominates Carrie K. Zalewski to be a member of the Pollution Control Board.
- AM 980683 - Nominates Maria Bocanegra to be Arbitrator of the Illinois Worker's Compensation Commission.
- AM 980684 - Nominates Stephen Friedman to be Arbitrator of the Illinois Worker's Compensation Commission.
- AM 980685 - Nominates Steven Fruth to be Arbitrator of the Illinois Worker's Compensation Commission.
- AM 980686 - Nominates Michael Nowak to be Arbitrator of the Illinois Worker's Compensation Commission.
- AM 990001 - Nominates Felicia Norwood to be Director of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services.
- AM 990002 - Nominates Nirav Shah to be Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health.
- AM 990003 - Nominates Brien Sheahan to be a member and Chair of the Illinois Commerce Commission.
- AM 990007 - Nominates Constance Beard to be Director of the Illinois Department of Revenue.
- AM 990008 - Nominates Wayne Rosenthal to be Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.
- AM 990014 - Nominates Candice Jones to be Director of the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice.
- AM 990026 - Nominates Leo Schmitz to be Director of the Illinois State Police.
- AM 990043 - Nominates George Sheldon to be the Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services
- AM 990044 - Nominates James Schultz to be the Director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

President Obama Designates Pullman as a National Park



On Thursday, President Obama arrived in Chicago to designate Pullman a National Park Area.

Working with the Illinois Labor History Society and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, the Illinois AFL-CIO Executive Board unanimously passed a resolution in September 2013 urging the creation of a Pullman National Monument in Chicago, Illinois, as a unit of the National Park System to be managed by the National Park Service (NPS). The establishment of a national park site at Pullman is the best way to both honor and complete more than six decades of preservation work rendered by community members and champions who think that the Pullman story is of national significance and worthy of commemoration.

George Pullman created the model factory town in the 1880s to facilitate the manufacture of railroad passenger cars and provide residences for workers and their families. Pullman believed a planned community with decent housing, tidy parks, and amenities would help him recruit and keep a reliable and productive workforce. However, Pullman's utopic vision was undermined by the Panic of 1893 which produced the worst financial crisis the United States had known up to that time. When Pullman lowered his worker's wages without lowering the rents they paid on his company-owned housing, anger and frustration boiled over into labor unrest and the famous Pullman Strike of 1894. The walkout by Pullman's employees grew into a nationwide boycott of Pullman cars which led to a national disruption of rail traffic.

During the 1920s Pullman again faced labor challenges, this time from the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Led by A. Philip Randolph, this African American union fought for and eventually won a collective bargaining agreement with the Pullman Company in 1937. Randolph and his union would play a major role in the fight for Civil Rights in the United States, most critically in organizing the 1963 March on Washington.

Designating Pullman as a national monument will bring economic benefits to the Pullman community. According to a report released by the National Parks Conservation Association, a Pullman national park may generate 300,000 visitors annually and create more than 300 jobs.

The only other designated National Park Area in Illinois is the Lincoln Home site in Springfield.



Photo source: Mike Matejka

Labor Holds Meeting On Rauner Anti-Worker Agenda

On Wednesday, February 11th, nearly 300 leaders from Central Labor bodies, Building Trades Councils and leaders from both public and private unions met at the Chicago Laborer's District Council for a briefing on the Bruce Rauner's War on the Middle Class.

Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan opened the meeting by providing an overview of the Rauner Agenda including the establishment of Right to Work Zones, to the illegal withholding of fair share funds from State employees, to proposing anti-worker reforms in Workers' Compensation and Unemployment benefits. Chicago Federation of Labor Jorge Ramirez followed and stressed the importance of all unions working together to defeat the Rauner Agenda on behalf of all workers, not just those fortunate enough to carry a union card.

Illinois Senate President John Cullerton and Illinois House Labor Committee Chair Jay Hoffman each addressed the meeting with the message that the Rauner Agenda is not good for Illinois Working families.

When addressing the illegal withholding of fair share fees from State Employees, AFSCME Council 31 Executive Director Roberta Lynch emphasized that all of the State's unions, private and public, are committed to growing the middle class and widening the path of opportunity for all workers. The Rauner agenda is about forcing down wages and engaging in a race to the bottom.



AFL-CIO YOUNG WORKER SUMMIT

EDUCATE, ASPIRE, ORGANIZE.

March 19-22, 2015
Hilton Chicago
720 South Michigan Ave., Chicago

Across the country, young people are leading some of the nation's most critical fights for social and economic justice. At the 2015 Next Up Young Worker Summit, we'll build a common agenda, provide young activists with the tools they need to build power and begin mapping out the strategy we'll need to claim the future we deserve. Join us!

Early bird registration, until Feb. 15:
\$45 employed, \$25 unemployed/student

Late registration, after Feb. 15:
\$60 employed, \$35 unemployed/student

Rooms at the Hilton Chicago:
\$149/night

www.nextupsummit.org



3rd Annual Union Sportsmen Alliance Dinner

The Union Sportsmen Alliance (USA) is working to unite union sportsmen and sportswomen and likeminded individuals to educate future generations of sportsmen, conserve healthy wildlife habitat and volunteer their time and skills for projects that improve access to quality places to hunt, fish, shoot and recreate outdoors.

On **March 2, 2015**, USA, in conjunction with the Chicago & Cook County Building and Construction Trades Council, the Chicago Federation of Labor and the Illinois AFL-CIO, will host the 3rd Annual Illinois Conservation Dinner at the Sheet Metal Workers Local 73 Hall, 4550 Roosevelt Road, in Hillside.

Please visit www.ilaf-cio.org for more information.