



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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On These and Other Legislative Issues Important To Working People**

*The General Assembly is scheduled to return January 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of 2009 for the final two days of the 95<sup>th</sup> General Assembly. January 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> will be the first two days of the 96<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.*

## ACTION IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### **SB 620 – Rail Police Oversight**

Sen. Haine (D – Alton)  
Rep. Holbrook (D – Belleville)

#### **SUPPORT**

Requires allegations of abuse of authority or misconduct by members of a railroad police force to be investigated by the Illinois State Police.

*Passed Senate 33-16-2.*

*Awaits Governor's signature.*

### **HB 2047 – Firefighter Pension and Benefits**

Rep. Joyce (D – Worth)  
Sen. Link (D – Lake Bluff)

#### **SUPPORT**

Requires the pension and benefits of a firefighter whose district is being dissolved to carry over to their new district of employment.

*Passed Senate 55-0-0.*

*Awaits Governor's signature.*

### **SB 2520 – Firefighter Pension & Health Care**

Sen. Raoul (D – Chicago)  
Rep. Molaro (D – Chicago)

#### **SUPPORT**

Closes a loophole for Chicago firefighters in their pension code. Allows a firefighter who has

become terminally ill to apply for disability payments and benefits as well. This will allow spouse and family to receive health care benefits.

*Passed Senate 52-0-0.*

*Awaits Governor's signature.*

### **SB 1529 – Macon-Piatt Corrections**

Sen. Forby (D – Benton)  
Rep. Bradley (D – Marion)

#### **SUPPORT**

Codifies an agreement made between AFSCME Council 31, Illinois Central Management System, and Illinois Department of Corrections/Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice to make the employees of the Macon-Piatt Corrections Special Education District (MCSED), who provide educational services in state correctional facilities, state employees.

*Passed Senate 40-11-1.*

*Awaits Governor's signature.*

### **SB 1981 – Film Tax Credit**

Sen. Hendon (D – Chicago)  
Rep. Mautino (D – Spring Valley)

#### **SUPPORT**

Increases the film tax credit from

20% to 30%, and makes it a permanent tax credit as opposed to having to renew it annually. This will allow for film studios to pursue long term productions in Illinois.

*Passed Senate 52-0-1.*

*Awaits Governor's signature.*

### **SB 1987 – Tenaska Clean Coal Plant**

Sen. Trotter (D – Chicago)  
Rep. Hannig (D – Gillespie)

#### **SUPPORT**

The legislation provides a framework for two plants currently under development in Illinois including the Taylorville Energy Center which will produce both electricity and natural gas, and Power Holdings which will produce natural gas. The projects will create 3,000 union construction jobs, several hundred permanent mining and plant jobs, and infuse over \$1 billion dollars into the Central Illinois region. These plants will help revitalize the Illinois coal industry by burning coal cleanly and effectively.

*Passed Senate 53-0.*

*Awaits Governor's signature.*

## **Blagojevich Line Item Vetoes the Budget**

The General Assembly passed SB 1103 in September which was designed to restore approximately \$230 million in budget cuts the Governor had made earlier in the summer. After the General Assembly adjourned on Thursday the Governor approved only approximately \$176 million of that amount. The amount approved will help keep substance abuse centers and 11 state parks open, as well as prevent around 320 layoffs that were scheduled for November 30<sup>th</sup>.

The Governor used his veto power to cut approximately \$55 million from the budget, which included 13 state historic sites and employees in the Attorney General, Treasurer, and Secretary of State's office.

AFSCME stated that they were grateful for the appropriations to prevent the layoffs, but still disappointed that the historic sites were not approved for funding. They also stated that they will continue to fight for full funding and await official notice that the layoffs will be rescinded.

Lawmakers will be able to restore these cuts again in the last two days of the 95<sup>th</sup> General Assembly when they return January 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of 2009. It would require 36 votes in the Senate and 71 in the House to override the line item veto.



## New Senate Leaders are Elected

Late Wednesday evening members of the Senate Democrats and Republicans met in their respective caucuses to elect new leaders. Senate President Emil Jones Jr. is retiring following the close of the 95<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, and Minority Leader Frank Watson is relinquishing his leadership position following a recent stroke.

The Senate Democrats elected John Cullerton of Chicago to be their new Senate President. Cullerton has a law degree from Loyola University and was first elected to the House in 1979. He served there for 12 years as Speaker Pro Tempore and Democratic Floor Leader. He then moved over to the Senate in 1992, where he is best known for his work on the Senate Judiciary Committee and the many responsibilities that flow through that committee. Cullerton has a 92% lifetime voting record with the Illinois AFL-CIO. We look forward to working with him in the future. Following his election he stated that his first priorities would be a capital construction program and education funding reform.

The Senate Republicans elected Christine Radogno of Lemont to be their new Minority Leader. Radogno has a Masters degree in Social Work and was elected to the Senate in 1996. While there she has risen to Deputy Minority Leader, and second in command to Leader Frank Watson. Radogno will be the first female leader of any legislative caucus in Illinois. She is best known for her diligent work on the Senate Appropriations Committee. In her twelve years in the Senate she has a 32% voting record with the Illinois AFL-CIO.

## STATE NEWS

### State Economic Outlook

The Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability (CGFA) met on Wednesday to discuss the state's economic outlook. Unofficially, the FY 2009 budget was based upon revenues of \$30.451 billion. CGFA's estimate of \$29.109 billion is \$1.342 billion less than those budgeted figures. In recent weeks, the Department of Revenue has indicated that receipts from income and sales taxes could fall \$800 million to \$1 billion short of budgeted amounts. CGFA's latest estimate falls within that framework, as net personal, net corporate, and sales taxes comprise \$828 million of the expected shortfall.

### New Chair of the Workers Compensation Commission

Based upon the recommendations of the Workers Compensation Advisory Board, composed of representatives from business and labor, the Governor's office filed paperwork Thursday appointing Amy Masters as Acting Chair effective today. An official announcement was made this morning. It was also announced that Bertha Parker, who supervises the Arbitration department, will serve as Acting Secretary.