



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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PUBLISHED FOR LABOR ACTIVISTS BY THE ILLINOIS AFL-CIO

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The General Assembly met Tuesday and Wednesday this week and little activity occurred outside of Gov. Pat Quinn's State of the State Address on Wednesday. Labor lobbyists met on Tuesday to begin sorting through bill introductions and agenda items. The legislature is scheduled to reconvene Tuesday and Wednesday. Next Friday (Feb. 10) is the Senate bill introduction deadline.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Gov. Quinn's Address Highlights First Session Week

Gov. Pat Quinn outlined his version of the *Illinois Jobs Agenda* during his State of the State speech Wednesday in the House chambers of the State Capitol.

The speech basically kicks off the 2012 session of the Illinois General Assembly, as senators and representatives met for the first time this week since veto session late last year.

With more details likely to come in his upcoming Budget Address, Quinn sketched broad strokes to his plan for economic renewal. Specifically, Quinn proposed:

- Ending the natural gas utility tax
- Establishing a hiring veterans tax credit for employers
- Establishing a state child tax credit (\$100 per year for family of four)
- Significant additional investment in early childhood education, increasing dropout age to 18, and added funding for MAP scholarships

Among his infrastructure investment plans are updating schools and classrooms as well as "clean water" initiatives to repair and replace water mains, sewers and treatment plants.

Saying cuts alone would not get Illinois out of its bleak financial position, Quinn said the tax credits and infrastructure spending would create an environment for economic prosperity.

"I look forward to working with you (legislature) to find the proper funding to meet these urgent needs," Quinn

said. "By investing in Illinois and investing in our people, we are building and growing our economy."

Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael T. Carrigan said focusing on jobs is critical as the state slowly pulls out of economic troubles.

"Creating long-term, good-paying jobs will kick start the economy and begin rebuilding our decimated middle class," Carrigan said. "I'm sure the Governor will get into more specifics in his Budget Address."

Quinn's Budget Address is scheduled for Feb. 22.

Pension reform must "fair to the employees"

Quinn addressed the state's shorting pension funds by issuing a call for a team approach, saying a fix must be "constitutional."

"We must do it together in a way that is meaningful, constitutional, and fair to the employees who have faithfully contributed to the system," Quinn said.

Though corporate-backed groups like the Civic Committee attack the protection, the Illinois Constitution safeguards diminishing the pensions of public employees.

Governor Touts Exports

Using union auto makers in South Chicago (Ford) and Belvidere (Chrysler) as well as Caterpillar and John Deere as examples, Quinn announced the creation of an "Export Advisory Council" led by private sector leaders with the goal of doubling the amount of exports from Illinois by 2014.

**PRIMARY ELECTION - MARCH 20
EARLY VOTING FEB. 27-MARCH 15**



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