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Fwd: Veto session - but not 100th GA - now over

1 message

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Mon, Dec 3, 2018 at 7:42 AM

December board meeting

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From: **State School News Service** <j.m.broadway74@gmail.com>
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Bicentennial issue

Veto session - but not 100th GA - now over

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

When the Illinois House and Senate departed Springfield last week, they finished their lawmaking activities for 2018. But the 100th General Assembly to serve since statehood was [established 200 years ago on this date](#), remains viable, thanks to [SJR 83](#), the "adjournment resolution." It returns them to the Capitol on January 7.

What will they do on the 7th and 8th before the 101th General Assembly is sworn in on January 9? See, we don't know that. They didn't put the reason for those two session days in the resolution. But since it's in January, simple-majority votes - 60 in the House, 30 in the Senate - is all it will take to pass anything.

There's another factor in the "anything goes scenario." As Mindy Ruckman, legislative analyst for the faux "think tank" Illinois Policy Institute has written, 37 of the legislators - about 1 in 5 of them - will be "lame ducks." They won't be back in the 101th GA, so can "vote with little to lose." (I think her math is correct.)

In [Mindy's recent commentary](#), she warned us to "watch out for" a number of bad bills in the veto session. For example, she said SB 2892, imposing a "costly mandate" by requiring teachers - even newly hired ones - to be paid at least \$40,000 per year, could be enacted over Gov. Bruce Rauner's veto. ([She was wrong](#).)

Could a veto be overridden in early January? No. When the veto session convened last month, a constitutional clock started to tick. The time for any veto override voting will have run out long before January.

So anything passed January 7-8 would be newly sent to the governor. There are plenty of pending "vehicle bills" that can be amended to change the law for any state policy purpose. There are folks who know the reasons for these session days, but we are not among them. We'll just have to wait and be surprised.

But we can look into the past.

A few vetoed School Code-amending bills did receive the override votes they needed to become law in spite of the fact that Rauner frowned on them.

Example: The veto of [HB 4284](#), requiring that three members of the State Board of Education must "represent the educator community" was overridden by huge majority votes. So was the veto of [HB 4657](#), which sets up a task force on "Emotional Intelligence Education." ([This is currently a hot issue.](#))

[SB 2345](#), requiring school report cards to reflect the status of participation in the [Illinois Youth Survey](#), also became law by comfortable votes over Rauner's veto. The survey [asks students to report](#) their behaviors and beliefs about such issues as nutrition and drug use. (I believe participation may eventually be required.)

Our most closely-watched School Code bill in the veto session was [HB 5175](#), the bill that would have ended the State Charter School Commission's authority to impose the costs of a charter school on a school district whose elected board has lawfully considered and then voted against a proposal to create such a school.

In last week's issue [you learned what a farce](#) the Senate's "debate" of a motion to override Rauner's veto of that bill was. It was the last bill heard on the Senate's last session day - so many senators would have already left the chamber and no [reconsideration of the vote](#) would be possible.

The Senate sponsor of the bill, [Sen. Bill Cunningham](#) (D-Chicago), gave a presentation so bad it must have been written by the Illinois Network for Charter Schools. (Do such things happen? Sure!) But what does Cunningham know? He's not on the Senate Education Committee and his school district has no elected board.

Cunningham made no effort to rebut testimony in opposition to the override motion by [Sen. Chuck Weaver](#) (R-Peoria) who falsely implied that without the SCSC citizens who disagree with a charter denial would have nowhere to appeal. (Fact: The courts are the venue to which citizens usually appeal unfavorable rulings.)

Weaver mocked concern for "local control" of schools. He pointed out that, "while we all support local control there are times when a local school board acts in error." Every time the Commission has overturned a decision by a local board, he said, "it's been because the school districts should have been overruled."

Most legislators would not do that. In fact, the HB 5175 veto was consciously handled in such a way that a large majority of Illinois legislators will be able to tell their constituents, "I voted for local control." But it will be slick truth, because the veto did prevail, as they knew it would, as a lasting barrier to local control.

It all happened quickly, in about eight minutes. A transcript of floor sessions is provided on the legislature's web site, but it will be months before Thursday's session transcript is posted. (But those eight minutes or so [can be heard at this link](#). Cunningham was empty; Weaver was garbled and mostly false.)

Did money grease the positive outcome for charter advocates, as I [suggested last week](#)? Well, the dominant charter advocacy group in the state (other than the Commission itself) "controlled" \$1.7 million, according to the [Sunshine Project](#), and now [expects to spend 'a seven-figure sum](#) to influence Chicago's city elections.

Here's something for youth football fans to consider. A [study reported last week](#) by the Radiological Society of North America meeting in Chicago revealed that *changes occur in the*

brains of young football players after just one season of play. (I can hear [Pop Warner now](#). "Changes? Maybe they're good changes!")

I know I'll hear from a few dads who think being on a football team is the only way a child can develop character and learn about teamwork - and I also may hear from some adults whose income relies on youths butting heads - but I'll remind you again that a child's brain is not a mere possession, *it is who he is*.

The fact that the changes reported were in the fibers of the corpus callosum is significant. The corpus callosum is the rope-like bundle of nerve fibers that connect the right and left brain hemispheres. Relevant science emerges from the procedure of *severing those fibers* as a way to relieve epilepsy symptoms.

Dr. Roger Sperry, a neuroscientist at California Institute of Technology (before that at University of Chicago) received a Nobel Prize in 1981 for his research involving severed corpus callosums - "split-brain" research. In a 1964 article that appeared in Scientific American [he described an effect of this procedure](#):

"It was as though each hemisphere were a separate mental domain operating with complete disregard, indeed, with a complete lack of awareness, of what went on in the other. The split-brain animal behaved in the test situation as if it had two entirely separate brains." (Yes, I agree, that's sort of creepy.)

In [his 1981 Nobel Lecture](#), Sperry said brain studies reveal a "unique individuality [that] makes that of fingerprints or facial features appear gross and simple by comparison." Current knowledge of the brain, he said, suggests that: "The need for *educational tests and policy measures* to selectively identify, accommodate, and maximize the differentially specialized forms of individual intellectual potential becomes increasingly evident." [Emphasis mine.]

So educators and policymakers should recognize that all brains are different, Sperry urged while receiving the Nobel Prize in 1981. Just two years later [A Nation At Risk](#) was published, launching the standardization movement. How ironic is that?

A final word. "Follow the brain," says [Yale philosopher Shelly Kagan](#) (also from Chicago). A heart replacement is a heart transplant, he agrees, and new (to you) lungs are a lung transplant. Then would getting someone else's brain be a brain transplant? "No," says Kagan, "that's someone else getting a body transplant."

Bottom line: *Adults should not risk children's brains for a living.*

Here's the ISNS Holiday Publication Schedule: There will be none. Unless something unexpected occurs, you will not hear from me again until January. (The only exceptions to this will be those of you to whom I am obligated to transmit an invoice for your 2019 subscription. That *will come by email* via PNC Bank.)

Meanwhile, have the best holiday season ever!

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