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Fwd: Now we'll see political threats at work

1 message

Jason Bauer <jbauer@panaschools.com>
To: Nicole Blodgett <nblodgett@panaschools.com>

Tue, May 7, 2019 at 8:30 AM

May Board Meeting

----- Forwarded message -----

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

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Now we'll see political threats at work

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

The House and Senate convene today at noon. Since Friday is the deadline for bills to escape committees in the second chamber, there will be relatively little action this week on the chamber floors. The Senate Appropriations II Committee is scheduled to [talk about ISBE funding at 10:00](#). (You can [monitor it here](#).)

Most committee meetings on PS-12 education issues are scheduled for Wednesday, as usual. The House PK-12 committee on [curriculum and policies](#) meets at 8:30, and the one on [administration, licensure and charters](#) follows at 2:00. Both have time-consuming agendas. (You can [monitor those committees here](#).)

Bills pending in committees have come a long way. They were filed in a different chamber from where they now sit, were approved by committees in the chamber of origin and passed by a majority of legislators on the floor. They now need just a favorable committee vote to reach the second-chamber floor.

Many won't get that vote. They'll die on Friday's deadline. Maybe their key clauses will be amended onto a bill that did get out of committee. Maybe they'll get their own deadline extended; it happens. For most it will be maybe next year. The ISNS [bill-tracking page](#) is current, for now. Committee postings are reflected on it.

Only credulity can block graduated tax now. That's not an expression of confidence. Credulity is a powerful human trait. [In this brief film clip](#), Sir Arthur Conan Doyle talks about writing the mysteries of Sherlock Holmes, perhaps the character in literature who most demands scientific evidence as the basis of any belief.

In the same narrative, Doyle describes his long belief in "spiritualism," his certainty that he has had many experiences of a spiritual nature, and he is dismissive of anyone who would doubt, for example, the reality of the "[Cottingley Fairies](#)," a hoax perpetrated by two girls, cousins, using a camera to do so in 1920.

How could anyone believe such tripe? Well, Doyle did, and he was not alone. The cousins of Cottingley were a sensation in the tabloids of England in their day. Less endearingly, the Illinois Policy Institute (fake think tank) has launched attacks on Pritzker and his tax proposal that are [no more credible than fairy tales](#).

They call it a proposal for a "jobs tax," perhaps suspecting most people already know what a graduated income tax system is and, gasp, think it's a good idea. There's never an honest word about how a graduated tax would differ from our current flat tax, or how individual taxpayers would be affected. It's just show biz.

A new element - threats to individual legislators - has been added to the IPI repertoire. A [30-second video clip](#), not a word of truth in it, ends with a "call your legislator" message; there are six versions, one for each of the legislators the IPI has decided to hold responsible. Five are Democrats, one is an unlucky Republican.

The Democrats called out by the IPI are: [Monica Bristow](#) of Alton, [Jonathan Carroll](#) of Northbrook, [Tera Costa Howard](#) of Lombard, [Jerry Costello](#) of Red Bud and [Mary Edly-Allen](#) of Libertyville. All represent areas that have historically elected Republicans to the legislature. Being named may scare them, don't you think?

The Republican the IPI wants viewers to contact and "thank for being on our side" is [Teri Bryant](#) of Mt. Vernon. She's a reliable member of the GOP, even talks with a southern accent. Why would the IPI call her out? Maybe they're still fuming over that vote for the budget, the tax hike, the end of the impasse in 2017.

It will take 71 votes in the House to let the public decide the graduated tax issue in November of 2020. The Democrat caucus has 74 members. If the IPI can peel off four Democrats - and keep all Republicans on the reservation - it can block the resolution and preserve the flat tax so favored by most wealthy folks.

Here's an [excellent explanation](#) entitled: "Don't believe the Illinois Policy institute."

Unfunded pension liability has grown but the plan to achieve 90% funding of accrued liabilities by 2045 is working, according to the [latest report on the subject](#) from the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability, a bipartisan research and analysis arm of the Illinois General Assembly.

The key paragraph of this 220-page report is in the Executive Summary (page i):

"If the State continues funding according to [current law], the projected accrued liabilities of the State retirement systems will increase from \$229.3 billion at the end of FY 2019 to \$331.0 billion at the end of FY 2045 [but] the projected actuarial value of assets is projected to increase from \$92.5 billion to \$297.9 billion.

"Consequently, the projected unfunded liabilities are projected to decrease from \$136.8 billion at the end of FY 2019 to \$33.1 billion at the end of FY 2045, and the projected funded ratio is expected to increase from 40.3% in FY 2019 to 90.0% by the end of FY 2045." It's a rosy scenario - impossible just with current revenue streams.

The unavoidable burden of pension system obligations - a consequence of decades' worth of fiscal malpractice by state legislators and governors (much of it reported by ISNS over the years) - is a major driving force behind Gov. Pritzker's plan to shift Illinois into the graduated income tax rate system most other states use.

I waited a long time for JB Pritzker to become Illinois' governor, and I told him so [when I met JB and MK Pritzker](#) at the Old State Capitol on January 13. It was not for JB *per se* that I waited, of course. Rather, as I told him, I had waited for decades to see "a Democrat whom I could respect" get elected to the office.

Bear in mind that I had already enjoyed the privilege of citizenship under *Republican* governors who were worthy of great respect. Richard Ogilvie, in my view, was the most honorable governor in my lifetime; James R. Thompson and Jim Edgar, each in his own way, had also governed Illinois with distinction.

But on the Democrat side, as [you've read in this space before](#), the greatest loss Illinois citizens ever sustained, in my view, occurred when Dan Walker, a charismatic but insufferably egotistical liar, fooled enough voters to upset Paul Simon in the Democrat primary of 1972. Luckily, Thompson dispatched Walker after only one term.

But it would be 26 years before another Democrat would hold the top political office in Illinois. And who did we get? Rod Blagojevich, a man *even less worthy of respect than Walker*. Then came Pat Quinn, a buffoon who had organized college campuses for Walker in 1972 - way back when *JB was only 7 years old*.

The door is opening for recreational marijuana. This has also been a long time coming. I recommended legalizing pot in an opinion piece published in the Edwardsville Intelligencer, also back in the early 1970s. To recommend that something be legal is not the same as encouraging people to use it. My point at the time was just that criminalizing its use did not (and could never) have a beneficial social effect. It seemed just an excuse to incarcerate young black men.

Now [Pritzker, and legislators](#) supporting his position on this, have announced an agreement that addresses the failure of [reefer madness](#)-driven prohibition and the discriminatory policing throughout the "war on drugs." The plan is to expunge criminal convictions that this particular form of social myopia has spawned.

"This legislation puts social justice first by acknowledging the damages to overpoliced communities during prohibition," said Senator Toi Hutchinson. "The expungement program is the most ambitious and comprehensive in the nation, creating a mechanism for erasing hundreds of thousands of offenses."

The policy [proposal is comprehensive](#). It tells how businesses would be licensed to grow marijuana, and how a person can just grow their own pot if they wish. It tells how the new policy would help areas "disproportionately impacted" by the war on drugs. Pot legalization would "right some wrongs," Pritzker says.

It is important to note that the governor is counting on \$170 million in marijuana licensing revenue in the coming fiscal year as just part of the effort to help Illinois limp into the 2021-2022 period when the revenue boost of the graduate income tax will begin - assuming the voters approve that in 2020.

These special ISNS features will be updated regularly: the [bill-tracking web page](#) showing the status of viable bills that could affect public education policy, and a page of links to all [ISNS newsletters so far delivered](#) in 2019. (The URL for these pages was changed for April 15, so only ISNS readers can access them.)

The only way to contact me: Use the link below. As soon as you "submit" your message, it is sent to me by email. Your message may be complex and "attached" to a document, or it may be as simple as "call me."

IF YOU NEED TO SPEAK WITH ME directly, leave a phone number for me to call and tell me what would be a good time to converse. I am always connected to my email, and I promise to respond to you as soon as possible.

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Your input - questions, comments, suggestions - are valued. For twenty-four years ISNS has been guided by wisdom "from the field." To contribute in this way, just [click this link to my contact form](#).

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