

December 1, 2016



ALLIANCE LEGISLATIVE REPORT (99-58)

NO SURPRISE: DEADLOCKED BUDGET

It looks like no deal on a budget. Though **Governor Bruce Rauner** and legislative leaders met daily this week, no agreement has been reached on either another stop-gap budget or a more permanent “grand compromise” budget. Although the education budget adopted in June was for the entire fiscal year, the budget for most State services is set to expire on December 31.

House Speaker Michael Madigan continues to insist that an agreement be made on the budget alone; no reforms included. The Governor persists that no budget, at least a budget with revenue enhancements, will be signed without some reforms that will help the State grow the economy in future years and help middle class taxpayers. At a minimum, the Governor wants to include provisions for term limits on State legislators and a property tax freeze.

FUTURE TAX VOTES

Members of the House of Representatives went as far as going on record to say that they do not think a “lame-duck” legislature should be allowed to easily raise income tax rates. Historically, big-ticket items and “hard votes” would be addressed in the few legislative days between a General Election and the day the election winners are sworn into office (second Wednesday of January). With no election accountability for those legislators who lost (or did not run for) their seat, these “lame ducks” would have more latitude to vote yes on the controversial questions, such as an increase in the income tax rate.

Currently, it takes a 3/5 vote for any bill that has an immediate effective date (like a tax increase) from June 1 until the end of the year. Starting January 1, it goes back to a simple majority. That is why the “lame duck” sessions are held in January.

But this week, the House approved **HJRCA 62 (Franks, D-Woodstock)** to amend the State Constitution to require a 3/5 vote until new legislators are sworn in. The resolution passed Thursday on a vote of 84-18-2, but still requires a vote in the Senate. The Senate vote could occur in January, but any such vote in that chamber is expected to have a more difficult chance of passage.

CHICAGO TEACHERS PENSIONS

When the education appropriations bill was approved in June there may – or may not have – been a deal between Governor Rauner and Chicago Democrats on appropriating funds to help Chicago Public Schools make payments to its teachers’ pension fund. In **SB 2822 (Cullerton, D-Chicago)**, \$215 million was appropriated for the CPS teachers’ pension fund. The Governor says it was contingent on the legislature approving pension reform legislation before the end of the year; **Senate President John Cullerton** says there was no such deal.

The bottom line is that the Governor vetoed SB 2822 today, firing a giant hole in the CPS budget. The Cullerton-led Senate promptly voted to override the veto. The House had not yet taken up a vote on the veto override motion at the time this report was sent.

WHAT IS NEXT?

The legislature will adjourn tonight and is scheduled to return for the “lame duck” session on Monday, January 9 and Tuesday January 10. The new 100th Illinois General Assembly will be sworn in at noon on Wednesday, January 11.

THE USUAL FLURRY OF LAST-MINUTE ACTION

As per usual, bills and ideas that have sat idle for the past year suddenly needed urgent attention this week. Bills designed to allow two nuclear power plants to remain open, appropriate funds for the Chicago Public Schools teacher pension fund, and test for lead in school drinking water have all been under consideration in the Capitol.

Here is a recap of significant legislation from this week:

SB 514 (McGuire, D-Joliet) was amended so that Elwood CCSD 203 could transfer \$81,000 from a bond fund to the operations and maintenance fund. A second amendment was approved to allow Sandoval CUSD 501 to extend the date they may issue bonds from March 19, 2017 to March 19, 2022 and that the debt not be considered as a part statutory debt limitations. The bill was approved by both chambers and will be sent to the Governor for consideration.

SB 516 (Clayborne, D-E. St. Louis) was amended to make specific changes in property tax law to allow Mascoutah CUSD 19 to maximize federal Impact Aid by meeting local share requirements because of the military base within the area. The bill was approved by both chambers and will be sent to the Governor.

SB 550 (Steans, D-Chicago) was amended to require school districts and day care centers to test for lead in their drinking water supply. The Alliance has been at the negotiating table on this issue since the spring session. The amendment was adopted by the House Environment Committee Wednesday and the bill is pending on the House floor. Opposition by municipalities and water utility entities has slowed the bill and no floor vote has yet been taken.

SB 565 (Lightford, D-Maywood) requires an age-appropriate developmental and social and emotional screening to be included as part of the examinations and procedures that constitute a health examination. The Department of Public Health shall develop rules for the implementation of the screening in conjunction with a working group that includes the Illinois Association of School Boards. The bill was approved by both chambers and will be sent to the Governor for consideration.

SB 1393 (Bennett, D-Champaign) had an amendment filed by **Representative Scott Drury (D-Highwood)** to add burdensome new provisions on school districts regarding student data privacy. The amendment was defeated in the House Judiciary – Civil Committee. The Alliance was the only entity to testify against the amendment.

SB 1506 (Lightford) adds regional superintendents, school management, and Chicago principals to the Advisory Council on At-Risk Students established in PA 99-0721. The bill was approved by both chambers and will be sent to the Governor for consideration.

SB 2814 (Harmon, D-Oak Park), the multi-billion energy package that would allow two of Illinois’ nuclear power plants to remain open, was approved by the House on a vote of 63-38 Thursday night. Negotiations went on all week with 10 different amendments offered to the bill in the past three days. The Alliance weighed in on the measure, pushing to limit utility rate increases for school buildings. The Senate had not yet voted on the bill at the time this report was sent.

HR 917 (Flowers, D-Chicago) urges the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to officially recognize the importance and benefits of school diversity and to set it as a priority when making decisions regarding admissions policies and practices, creation of new schools, school rezoning, and other pertinent decisions and to commit to having a strategy in each district for overcoming impediments to school diversity. The resolution was adopted by the House of Representatives.

HJR 163 (Crespo, D-Streamwood) disapproves the mandate waiver request made by Central SD 104 seeking to issue \$19.5 million in bonds increasing the district's bond debt limit from 6.9% to 19%. The resolution was adopted by both chambers and the request is denied.

This legislative report was written and edited by the lobbyists of the Illinois Association of School Boards to provide information to the members of the organizations that comprise the Statewide School Management Alliance.

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