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Fwd: Senate convenes Sunday for override vote

1 message

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To: Dara Thompson <dthompson@panaschools.com>

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Jason

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From: **State School News Service** <jbroadway@stateschoolnews.com>
Date: Fri, Aug 11, 2017 at 11:13 AM
Subject: Senate convenes Sunday for override vote
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Senate convenes Sunday for override vote

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

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The Senate will be in session Sunday, apparently to consider a motion to override Gov. Bruce Rauner's action on SB 1, the evidence-based school funding bill, an amendatory veto that has been trashed by educators and education advocacy groups as well most media - pretty much everyone except Rauner and the [Illinois Policy Institute](#).

It will be an historic event, certainly worth the time to monitor it. What time will it start? Surely sometime in the afternoon. Check the General Assembly's [home page \(top left\)](#) Sunday morning to find out. At the time indicated, use the [Senate's webcast link](#) to bring the action, the floor debate, to your computer screen.

Some patience may be required. As soon as the session-opening routine is complete - the determination of a quorum is on hand, the official dispensing with reading the journals - both partisan caucuses are likely to want to meet for an hour or so. Caucus meetings are held in secret, no public or media allowed.

Nothing but a stock photo of the Senate chamber will remain on your screen. You should leave the audio on and go about your business until you hear someone

announce that the Senate is back in session, or shortly will be. That will mean the fireworks are about to begin - or not - depending on caucus decisions.

Is a Senate override of Rauner's amendatory veto likely? I think so. Although Sen. Andy Manar (D-Bunker Hill) has filed no motion, to override or accept the veto, Manar agrees. "I am confident the votes exist to override the governor's veto," he told a rally audience Thursday. "We are prepared to override the veto on Sunday."

That won't finish the task, of course. If the Senate passes an override motion, the bill will be forwarded to the House, which will then have to duplicate the achievement; any other action by the House, or no action at all, simply kills the bill. That fact, counter-intuitively, works in favor of the override movement.

SB 1 is mainly a product of two years of effort by educators throughout the state, with participation by legislators on both sides of the partisan divide, to craft a bill to replace the "broken" school aid formula that has not been updated in 20 years and has contributed to a scandalously widening resource gap among schools.

Beyond that, Rauner's proposed "recommendations for change" have turned the bill into a monstrous measure, a complete reversal of its popular intended effects. In the policy process, a "poison pill" is an amendment that makes a bill impossible to enact. Rauner's veto functions as a reverse poison pill. It will not stand.

The question is not whether the veto will be sustained. It will not. But will the override fail and negotiations begin to shape a new bill, one that conforms to the budgetary need for an "evidence-based" distribution system but does not include the irrational and harmful provisions Rauner has tried to inject into it?

That's a question that will be answered by the Republican caucus in the House, where a dozen or so GOP votes will be required for an override to succeed. Will enough members of the House Republican caucus join the Democratic majority in an override effort (as they did last month to pass Illinois' first budget in two years)?

I believe they will - and largely because of Rauner's overreaching amendatory veto. After complaining that the bill would send too much state money to Chicago, Rauner vetoed the bill in a way that would not just remove hundreds of millions of dollars from Chicago - but would wreak fiscal havoc on school districts statewide.

Any "no" votes on the motion to override Rauner's amendatory veto will be construed (in political campaign brochures aimed at defeating incumbent Republicans who cast them) as votes "in favor" of all the ill-effects of that veto. And data is available to quantify those ill-effects in every legislative district.

Assuming the Senate override vote is successful, which is a safe assumption, the bill goes to House jurisdiction. The House will then have 15 calendar days to act on it. Any outcome other than the one that occurs in the Senate kills the bill. There are other complications, as usual, in the House.

House Speaker Michael Madigan was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention that drafted the document that voters ratified in 1970 as the "operating system" of the Illinois policy process. Included in it was the amendatory veto provision, which was explained simply as a governor's way of correcting technical errors.

But Rauner's "AV" doesn't deal with technical errors in SB 1 - it is, as Manar has complained, a "total rewrite" of the bill. In the past, Madigan has tended to just ignore bills which a governor has returned to the legislature with "recommendations for change" that, in his view, exceed the governor's constitutional authority.

If Madigan does that, SB 1 simply dies and negotiations for a replacement bill begin. But Madigan will conduct a roll-call on Rauner's amendatory veto. Why? Because he will want the House Republicans to put themselves on "the public record" as being with the governor - or with Illinois educators - on this question.

I believe a politically astute Republican will side with the education groups that begged Rauner not to seek changes to SB 1 in the first place, the organizations that have been rallying for an override of the amendatory veto. As Rauner has [plummeted in the polls](#), a legislator's vote on the AV grows in relevance.

Typically, when a governor hits the skids with the public, members of his party begin to "distance" themselves starting early in the election year when both the governor and the legislators will see their names on the ballot. But a vote seen as taking Rauner's side on SB 1 will be a "memorable" linkage. Voters will not forget.

So, yes, there's a sense brewing that legislators seeking reelection in 2018 will not want to be seen as "joined at the hip" with Gov. Bruce Rauner, whose legacy is already established as the governor who gave Illinois a disastrous two-year gap in state budgets, with ruinous effects on our universities and social safety net.

A vote against the override motion on SB 1 - that is, a vote for the governor on school funding - would cement the voters' impression that whoever cast that vote *is* joined at the hip with Rauner. All it would take is a dozen or so members of the House GOP caucus who do not want that impression to be cemented.

I believe it's likely that those GOP votes against Rauner's AV are there.

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