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Rocky veto session just one of Rauner's worries

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

The Illinois Senate has more than enough Democratic members to override vetoes by Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner, but the Illinois House needs help from members of Rauner's own party to pass an override motion. So you'd think, based on party loyalty and all, Rauner's vetoes should often prevail in the House.

But loyalty to Rauner is a little thin in the House these days.

During last week's three veto session days in the House, members of the chamber overrode 11 of Rauner's vetoes (one "amendatory" and ten total vetoes). And on two of the bills that Rauner totally vetoed, the House vote was *unanimous* in overriding the governor. *Unanimous*, folks. That may be unprecedented.

Now Rauner's supporters, that shrinking group, has made a big deal of the fact that a motion failed by a single vote to override his veto of a bill effectively prohibiting the creation of "right-to-work" zones. But it's too early for the business lobby to count that as a "victory." We'll see why in a moment.

First, I want to tell you about the biggest threat to Rauner's political ambitions, about a GOP primary election opponent he should not dismiss out of hand. [Rep. Jeanne Ives](#) (R-Wheaton) won't have his campaign cash, but she has something he desperately needs - issues that will resonate with the far right of the GOP.

What issues? This is surely [her stump speech](#). Sure, it starts with abortion, but it does not stop there. Rauner gets held responsible for some wretched economic statistics. Plus some big league corruption. And to top it off, he's a liar. It is unfortunate for Rauner that she can make a good case for each talking point.

Will Rauner debate her? He'd be a fool to do that. She has a kind of eloquent anger in her presentation - honed to a fine edge with every rant she's given on the floor of the House. She will appeal to the true anti-establishment libertarian who voted for Donald Trump last November and is looking for a hero here in Illinois.

A hero? Oh, yes, Ives is a West Point graduate (B.A. in economics), an Army veteran, a former ROTC instructor at Wheaton College (*Wheaton College!* Billy Graham's *alma mater!*). She's what [every Trump voter](#) is looking for, an angry outsider, a talent for sarcasm; she *wants to humiliate* (not just defeat) every opponent.

But what about all that Rauner campaign cash? If he survives the primary, that will be what saves him. But Jeanne Ives will give him fits - and may bump him off. Cash is most valuable to a political newcomer (like Rauner was in 2014 and J. B. Pritzker on the Democrat side now); it buys name-recognition, a necessary asset.

But Rauner already has more name-recognition than he needs. Money also delivers the campaign message, buys the TV ads, prints and distributes the slick brochures. Rauner can deliver a message to every Illinoisan every day. Problem is, a message from a man with a huge credibility problem often backfires.

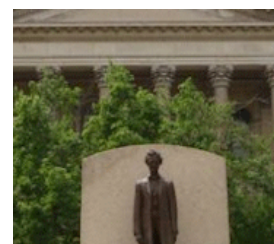
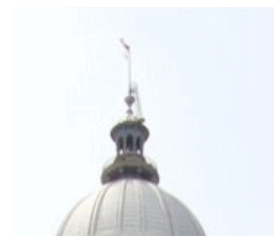
That's what Rauner has, and he is solely to blame for it. His first public statement as governor-elect - about "reaching out" to the Democratic legislative leaders and promising to "work with them" toward a better future - was a lie; he didn't reach out to them in any way. Rauner's word has just lost value ever since.

The abortion issue is the clearest and best known example. Credible organizations and Catholic Church officials swear he "promised" them a veto of [HB 40](#) - a bill to legalize abortion and fund them for poor women through Medicaid, no matter what the U.S. Supreme Court does on *Roe v. Wade*. But then he signed HB 40.

A lack of credibility offsets the cash advantage completely. The more a candidate with this problem communicates, the more he reminds the audience that he can't be trusted. Rauner would have a problem with any primary opponent next year, but one with the skills of Jeanne Ives may well dismantle him.

Can Ives make it all the way to the governor's mansion? Her biggest problem is that she's not well known and probably does not have the resources to remedy that by the March primary. But if she connects with the [Koch brothers](#) or Steven [Bannon](#) or other conduits to [limitless conservative cash](#), she's a huge threat.

If she gets by Rauner in the March primary election, she will contend in the general election no matter who emerges from the Democrats' gubernatorial primary. She'll be a focus of attention automatically; her Illinois-is-a-disaster message will still



resonate with many; she seems to [enjoy tongue-lashing others](#), also an asset.

Can she win next November? Most of us pundits discounted Trump's chances in 2016. Jeanne Ives is the Donald Trump of Illinois. I'm not predicting she'll be the next governor, but I do believe she may have to thank the Rauners for all their work of [repairing the Executive Mansion](#) - and doing it with private donations.

Back to the veto session, bill to fix a substitute teacher shortage was among the three-dozen or so bills Rauner vetoed this year. [HB 3298](#) had passed the House 99-1 back in April, but the vote to override Rauner's veto was unanimous, 110-0. Somehow, his argument that the bill was too costly just didn't fly.

Briefly, the bill would reimburse substitute teachers the amount they pay in certification fees if they teach at least ten days in the year after they receive their certificates. [Rauner pointed out](#) that the fee had been cut in half just last year, and less revenue to ISBE would mean cuts in other important programs.

The other veto unanimously overridden in the House last week was of [HB 3649](#), a bill requiring executive branch agencies to notify the Comptroller monthly on the amount of financial liabilities they have incurred, by fund source. Rauner accused the legislative branch of "micromanaging"; the legislators disagreed 112-0.

Rauner also vetoed an unfunded education mandate, a requirement in [HB 2977](#) that elementary schools teach all pupils cursive writing. If it's important to learning outcomes, it should be included in the learning standards, [Rauner said](#). Thirty-six House members agreed with Rauner, [but 77 did not](#).

Rauner's veto of the bill preventing "right to work" zones created by county or municipal ordinances was sustained last week when the House managed only 70 votes in favor of an override motion on [SB 1905](#). That's right, the motion fell just one vote short of a successful rejection of this anti-union veto.

Most of the floor debate focused on a flaw in the bill, the fact that it would have "criminalized" a city council member's vote to create such a zone by making it a misdemeanor. The House sponsor, [Rep. Martin Moylan](#) (D-Des Plaines) said that would be [fixed in a "trailer bill"](#), but the override vote still fell short.

Although anti-union forces opined that they had scored a major "victory" on SB 1905, the likelihood is that the substance of the bill will return to the House floor - either next week or in the spring - with the criminalizing element erased. Rauner is almost certain to get another chance to veto a bill such as this again.

Motions on vetoed legislation are heard first in the bills' chamber of origin, House bills in the House and Senate bills in the Senate. The House bills described above were not heard last week in the Senate; for Rauner's vetoes on them to be overridden with certainty, the Senate also will have to pass override motions.

The House and Senate return to the task of responding to Rauner's vetoes, and considering other policy questions, on Tuesday. Prior to that, on Monday, the [Senate Education Committee](#) will convene in Decatur for a "subject matter" hearing on the topic of the "teacher shortage in Illinois."

It's no coincidence, of course, that Decatur is where the district office of [Rep. Sue Scherer](#) is located. Scherer, who taught in the Decatur public school district for 34 years prior to becoming a legislator, was the House sponsor of HB 3298, the substitute teacher shortage relief bill described above.

The Senate may not achieve a unanimous override vote, like the House did on that bill, but it seems likely that the Senate will follow through with a rejection of Rauner's veto in the last part of the veto session, Tuesday through Thursday.

Later this month, on the 28th, committees of the House and the Senate will meet jointly in Chicago to receive "subject matter" testimony on the topic of "Economic Development and the Cannabis Regulation and Taxation Act." Participants will be members of the Senate Appropriations I Committee, the Senate Commerce and Economic Development Committee, the House Economic Opportunity Committee and the House Tourism, Hospitality and Craft Industries Committee.

Obviously, there will be no votes on legislation of this topic until the 2018 session at the earliest. But there is legislative language. Pending amendments to [SB 316](#) and [HB 2353](#) would, if enacted, allow use of marijuana - and tax it as a source of state revenue (a policy already adopted in other states).

Is Pat Quinn coming back? It almost seems like a [Halloween bad dream hangover](#), but the former governor, former state treasurer, former alleged ghost payroller for former governor and prison inmate Dan Walker - yes, Quinn is all that and more - has decided to run for the office of Illinois Attorney General in 2018.

The office is open in next year's elections because incumbent AG Lisa Madigan has declined to seek reelection. Quinn has been a Democrat - much to the irritation of the Illinois Democratic Party - since he helped Walker defeat Paul Simon in the 1972 Democratic gubernatorial primary. Sadly, he may well win again next year.

The missing 71st vote on SB 1905, the bill to preclude right-to-work zone proliferation, probably would have been cast by an absent legislator, [Rep. Sam Yingling](#) (D-Grayslake). Yes, his name is fun to say.

At the podium for the vote was House Deputy Majority Leader [Rep. Lou Lang](#) (D-Skokie). Yes, if you say his name three times quickly it sounds like a refrain from a [1960s Motown hit](#).

The size of the successful House override margins was amazing. Rauner's head must still be spinning. Yes, it reminded me of another musical hit from my youth, a [wonderful song of liberation](#).

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