



Jim Broadway

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Budget - and timely adjournment - seem likely

By Jim Broadway, Publisher, Illinois School News Service

[NOTE about the online version of this newsletter: The company that hosts my web site has been inconsistent lately. Now, instead of being merely difficult for me to access, it became over the weekend impossible to reach - for me or for you or for anyone. My tech consultant and I are shopping for a new host. The issue you get by email will continue to link you to the online version, but it may be a few days before that link works.]

I enjoyed meeting with a number of central Illinois education leaders recently and, after my presentation, one of the questions that seemed to be on everyone's mind was: "Will there be a budget this year?"

My answer was yes, there will be a state budget this year. Gov. Bruce Rauner has taken on huge political damage, and rightly so, for the ruinous two years that Illinois went without statutory spending authority. The universities will be trying to recover for at least a decade. The blame is heavy and it's mostly Rauner's.

My rationale at the time was that even a total amateur would learn not to make that mistake twice. He entered this term of office determined to see a "[Turnaround Agenda](#)" of forty-something policy initiatives enacted - most attacking public employee unions - and wouldn't even talk about a budget until that happened.

Things just haven't worked out very well for Bruce. He held out for a "Turnaround" like a child holding his breath, but eventually some of his House Republican colleagues defected to help pass a tax increase moving the state beyond the Rauner crisis and setting the stage for a policymaker performance review this year.

Performance review. In a democracy we would call that an election. In fact, even in whatever system of government we have today, we call it an election. Rauner needs to notch a win in the spring legislative session, or there's no way the voters will decide to rehire him for another four years in the fall.

So what do you do, Bruce? You set the bar low. Drop that silly "Turnaround Agenda." (You paid some consultants way too much to design that impossible package.) Yes, *talk about* things like low taxes, safe streets, more jobs and all that, but for your basic agenda set the bar real low: [A balanced budget and no new taxes](#).

That's right, you're judged on the headlines. The background chatter can be whatever you want, but don't let the people think they can judge you on anything but the headlines, on some achievements made inevitable by your political enemies, on some that would have happened in any case, with no thanks to you.

Rauner needs to avoid repeating past mistakes. The Democrats leading the legislature want no surprises, no trouble, in an election year. So it seems very likely that the House and Senate will adjourn on the scheduled date, May 31, after having passed a budget that reasonably can be purported to be balanced.

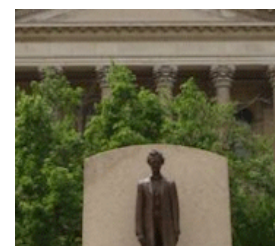
Speaking of Rauner's political enemies, Sen. Sam McCann (R-Jacksonville) has [decided to run for governor](#) this fall as a Conservative Party candidate. McCann, you recall, cast a vote helpful to public employees (his district is rife with them) in 2015, so Rauner recruited an opponent for McCann in the 2016 GOP primary.

With the help of public employee unions, McCann survived that attack and now seems to want payback against Rauner. McCann can't win in the fall, of course. His union friends will flock to the Democrat, billionaire JB Pritzker, to whom they have long been committed. But he'll surely give Rauner fits.

McCann gives the GOP base a reason to vote in November; they've soured on Rauner because of his ineffectiveness, his signing a bill expanding state-funded abortions and, perhaps, his propensity to prevaricate. (Or am I the only one who is offended by that?) Pritzker on the left, McCann on the right: Rauner's toast. Is Rauner worried? Sure looks like it. He's [paying for this campaign ad](#). (Rauner tries to link every opponent to demon Michael Madigan.)

Should all Democrats cheer? I think maybe not. McCann ensures Rauner's political demise, but the Republicans who rally to his candidacy - instead of just staying home in November - may provide the margin for Republicans in demographically close House or Senate races where Democrats now expect to prevail.

Both the House and the Senate are scheduled to be "in session" today through Friday. If they do that (cancellations are always possible), it will be the first time this year that they've been on the job for a full work week. Friday is the deadline for passing bills out of the chamber of origin, so they'll be on the floor a lot.



But if a bill can't pass unless it is amended (to remove some opposition, for example), committees will still convene. The [Senate Education Committee](#) is scheduled to meet at 4 p.m. Tuesday to consider the adoption of amendments to bills and to give other bills another chance to reach the Senate floor.

As amended, [SB 2344](#) would require districts to justify a decision to withdraw from a special education joint agreement; an amendment to [SB 2347](#) would require staff training in student discipline protocols; an amendment to [SB 2352](#) would make districts report to ISBE detailed information about school resource officers;

An amendment to [SB 2939](#) would regulate the Illinois Math and Science Academy's enrollment of out-of-state students; an amendment to [SB 3466](#) would revise provisions for holding adults accountable for the truancy of students.

[SB 2484](#) would require districts to report to ISBE regarding student-against-student sexual assaults. [SB 2572](#) would reduce the terms of physical education waivers (two amendments are pending). [SB 3537](#) would redefine the term "truant."

The two main House education committees will meet, simultaneously as usual, at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday. Most of the action will be in the one on [Licensing, Administration and Oversight](#), which will consider amendments to bills already on the House floor, and also bills with extended deadlines.

Amendment 1 to [HB 4167](#) (looks like a mandate) would require school boards and teacher representatives to develop plans for "short term substitute teacher training" for teachers holding a license so described; [HB 4768](#) would add several significant promises to the school board members' oath of office;

An amendment to [HB 4882](#) would allow a high school student taking a dual credit course from a university to be a member of a cohort of "Grow Your Own Teacher" education candidates; [HB 5175](#) would set the minimum starting teachers' salary in Illinois at \$40,000 as of June 30, 2019, up from the current \$9,000 (!).

Also posted for the hearing is a resolution, [HR 789](#), urging the Lake County High Schools Technology Campus to change its name. [Rep. Rita Mayfield](#) (D-Waukegan) also sponsors [HR 902](#), urging adoption of ACT "career and readiness standards," which is pending in the PK-12 "[Curriculum & Policies](#)" committee.

There's big news for Lincoln scholars. The [Papers of Abraham Lincoln](#), a project of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, has posted online hundreds of "documents from Lincoln's early life through the end of his tenure in the Illinois House of Representatives (1824-1841)."

From the page linked above, you can actually search for specific documents based on phrases in the text, authorship (of letters to Lincoln, for example), recipients (letters from Lincoln), document type (such as legislation he sponsored) or by specific date or ranges of dates. It's an amazing project for history students.

Although only a few hundred documents have "received the full editorial treatment of oral proofreading, annotation, encoding, and fact-checking," the project has another 5,000 or so documents still to be analyzed and eventually expects to have up to 150,000 document fully examined and available to the public.

Although he veered off course in ways that had to be corrected by others, former Gov. George Ryan is perhaps the person most responsible for the establishment of the ALPLM, seeded with \$50 million state dollars that were matched multiply by the federal government. Ryan's legacy is a mixture of good with the bad.

Links to newsletters posted so far this year are available [at this web page link](#). Please remember that *current* ISNS archives are for our subscribers only; *do not share this link*. Also, all 2017 issues can be found in the [web page at this link](#). You *may share the 2017 archives web page link* with anyone who wants to see it.

[NOTE: Due to failing web host, the links may not work right now.]

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