



Laborers' International Union of North America Midwest Regional Office

John F. Penn, LIUNA Vice President and Midwest Regional Manager

Illinois Legislative Update May 2, 2016

The Illinois General Assembly was not in session last week, but will be making up for in May: there are only two weekdays this month in which either the House or Senate are not meeting. Legislators will now be considering bills that were passed from the opposite chamber, so if a bill has not cleared that hurdle it is likely dead.

Constitutional Amendments on this Week's Docket

There are two ways in which a change to the state Constitution can be put on the ballot: by citizen petition or by passing a proposed change with a 3/5 majority through legislature. Both options require adoption by the voters in the November election. Proposed amendments must be finalized six months before the election, so the deadline for putting questions on the ballot is this Friday. LiUNA is actively supporting two amendments.

The first would replace the state's flat income tax with graduated rates. Currently, a Laborer making \$35,000 per year pays the same 3.75% income tax rate that someone making \$3.5 million pays. **HJRCA 59**, sponsored by **Rep. Christian Mitchell (D-Chicago)**, would bring much greater fairness to the Illinois' tax system while raising nearly \$2 billion in additional revenue. Families making less than \$200,000 would actually pay less in taxes than they pay now under the proposal and accompanying legislation introduced by **State Rep. Lou Lang (D-Skokie)**. Income that exceeds \$200,000, but is less than \$750,000 would be taxed at the same rate currently being paid and income in excess of \$750,000 would be taxed at gradually higher rates. HJRCA 59 represents a fair way to raise desperately needed revenue.

Further, many of the attacks on organized labor and workers' rights around the country have begun with state budget problems. Anti-labor Conservatives have used the lack of revenue as a "reason" to take away bargaining rights, attack pensions and attempt to lower workers' wages. In addition to being the right thing to do, by giving the State the means of raising revenue from those who can most afford to pay, we take away one of the lines of attack our opponents use against our members.

Another LiUNA-supported proposed constitutional change would limit the use of gas taxes, vehicle registration fees and other related "road funds" to transportation-related expenditures. The measure, **HJRCA 36**, is sponsored by LiUNA member **Rep. Brandon Phelps (D-Harrisburg)**. It passed with an overwhelming majority out of the House (98-4-2) and now awaits consideration in the Senate, where it is sponsored by **Sen. Bill Haine (D-Alton)**.

CALL TO ACTION - Member Post Card Program

LiUNA's Midwest Region sent rank-and-file members post cards last year with a message of thanks for their state representative who'd opposed Gov. Rauner's attacks on working people. We are now beginning the same effort for Illinois senators.

Members who have Democrat state senators or live in the districts of Republican Sen. Sam McCann (R-Plainview) or Neil Anderson (R-Moline) should begin receiving post cards this week. Please encourage these members to fill out the post card with their name and address and put it in the mail. The postage is already paid. The Midwest Region will collect and give them to the appropriate senator. This is an easy and effective way of letting our friends now that we have their back after they've had ours.

CALL TO ACTION - Labor Rally May 18

The Illinois AFL-CIO is planning a large-scale labor rally in Springfield on Wednesday, May 18 at 11:00 a.m. The plan is to gather by the Old State Capitol (just outside of the LiUNA Midwest Region offices) at 5th and Washington streets and walk the 6 blocks to the Capitol. (See attached flier).



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This is designed to be a major display of Labor unity and strength in light of the 16 months of constant attack on good wages and the right to a strong voice on the job by Bruce Rauner. He shows no sign of giving up, so we must show him – and lawmakers – that we won't stop fighting him. So, please organize a large group of Laborers to attend on May 18!

Laborers'
International
Union of
North America

LIUNA!

Feel the Power

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