



ILLINOIS CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE

## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

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June 23, 2017

## *This Week in Springfield*

This week kicked off the start to the General Assembly's special legislative session. As you may recall, last week Gov. Rauner [issued a proclamation](#) calling legislators back to the state's capitol to resolve the budget impasse before the end of the 2017 fiscal year (June 30th).

The week began with [Gov. Rauner addressing the public](#) at the old state capitol in Springfield. During his address, the governor called for Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate to unite and approve the governor and GOP-backed 'Capitol Compromise.'

To this point, much of the activity has been behind the scenes in caucus meetings, meetings between legislative leaders and high level staff, and at media press conferences.

However, the House has held two Committees of the Whole this week on subjects relating to the GOP's 'Capitol Compromise.' Yesterday's hearing featured Leader Durkin's workers' compensation proposal and today's featured the concept of a statewide property tax freeze.

**Jay Shattuck, executive director of the Chamber's Employment Law Council** played the lead roll on behalf of the business community in testifying in support of Leader Durkin's workers' compensation reform proposal. [HB 4068](#) represents a majority of where bipartisan negotiations left off in the Senate on the Senate's grand bargained SB 12. While not



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perfect for the business community, the bill does make several positive changes to the state's workers' compensation system, such as; revisions to the medical fee schedule, closed drug formulary, freezes average weekly wage for four years at \$775, provides credits for injuries to the spine, returns the shoulder to part of the arm, provides for a definition of traveling employee, and makes other substantial system changes. For more information on the bill, [our one-pager may be found here](#).



ABOVE: Jay Shattuck, second from the left, testifies in support of HB 4068 in Thursday's Committee of the Whole.

The committee lasted well over 5 hours and included panels from both opponents and proponents of the bill. While no formal vote was taken during the committee, the bill has since been posted for a committee hearing tomorrow, June 24 in the House Labor and Commerce Committee. The Chamber has received word that the bill may very likely be passed favorably out of the committee. This would signal a positive step in the right direction for workers' compensation.

The Chamber is asking its member that are reading this prior to Saturday's 11:30 AM hearing, to [register an online whiteness slip in support the bill by clicking here](#).

**As this is being written, the House is currently** convened in a Committee of the Whole in which they are debating the concept of a statewide property tax freeze, [HB 4066](#) (Durkin). The bill would amend PTELL to freeze property taxes for 2017 through 2020 levy years to all taxing districts, including home rule units of government. The bill would also allow voters, by referendum, to lower levies, raise levies or renew the freeze in increments up to four years.



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In comparison, the Senate Democrats passed two property tax freeze proposals. [SB 484](#) would amend PTELL for 2017 and 2018 levy years to freeze property tax levies for units of local government, including home rule units but not the City of Chicago. The freeze does not apply to taxes levied to pay off bonds or pension payments. Adding, there is no mechanism for voters to extend or reduce the freeze.

The second Senate Democrat property tax freeze freezes property tax levies for school districts (exempting City of Chicago school districts) for two years. It would allow certain school districts to obtain a waiver from the State Board of Education from the freeze. No mechanism is included for voters to reduce or extend.

**GOP-BACKED PLAN WOULD HIT ROAD FUND**

The Chamber has also made legislators aware that the Republican's 'Capitol Compromise' includes the transfer of \$268 million in Road Fund dollars permanently away from the road and bridge construction to other transportation objectives. This would include \$231 million to Chicago transit, \$25 million in Road Fund dollars to make debt service payments on Transportation D bonds, and increases by \$2 million the Amtrak subsidy funded from the Road Fund.

The Chamber does not support such transfers and is lobbying legislators about the potential impact would have on the Road Fund.

**NON-BUDGET RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL BILL**

This week a non-budget bill that would radically put Illinois at a competitive disadvantage to the rest of the country was posted for a committee hearing this week but was not called for a vote. House Amendment No. 1 and 2 to [HB 1438](#) (Stratton) would open the floodgates of litigation by allowing any person to file lawsuits alleging violations of the Environmental Protection Act, a power currently afforded only to the Attorney General of State's Attorney. Employers could be required to pay civil fines, attorney's fees, and court costs.

HB 1438 seeks to reject any changes to any other federal statute relating to environmental protection, natural resources, workers' rights and protections or public health made at the federal level after January 1, 2017 by setting a baseline. Such



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a broad law would have a chilling impact on Illinois - as Illinois laws would be more strict than federal laws.

Illinois businesses would face significantly higher compliance costs and would make Illinois less competitive economically. Fortunately, the bill was never called for a vote. However, there was been word that the sponsor is preparing an amendment that may receive a hearing next week. The bill is an initiative of the Sierra Club.

**GOT 5 MINUTES TO SPARE? TAKE OUR SURVEY**

Due to the ongoing crisis in Springfield, we sincerely hope you will take five minutes to [complete the linked Illinois Chamber of Commerce membership survey](#). This survey is very valuable in augmenting the daily interactions we have with members on an individual basis.

The survey is weighted to public policy issues facing Illinois businesses, but I'm also hoping you will take the time to answer a couple of questions about your membership with the Chamber. All answers are anonymous unless you would like to share your contact information or would like a follow-up phone call from the Chamber team.

To take the survey, [click here](#).

**JOIN THE FIGHT: CAN THE TAX RALLY**

On July 1, Cook County will begin adding a tax to more than 1,000 everyday beverages, like juice drinks, pop, sports drinks, flavored water -- even iced tea and diet drinks! The tax is expensive, unfair and hits Cook County residents hard in their wallets.

On Tuesday, June 27th at the James R. Thompson Center's outdoor plaza at 10:30AM, join the thousands of residents, businesses and community organizations calling on Cook County Commissioners to repeal the beverage tax before it goes into effect on July 1. Attend the rally and make your voice heard! Send a message to the County Board to repeal the beverage tax before July 1st!

**EDIE AWARD APPLICATIONS DUE JUNE 30**

The Illinois Chamber is again teaming up with the Illinois Economic Development Association (IEDA) to present our 9th



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annual Economic Development in Illinois awards - the Edies!

We are very excited to have Nicor Gas sponsoring the awards!  
Thank you Nicor!

The Edies honor those who imagine, design, invest, build, and bring jobs, growth and prosperity to Illinois communities. But to showcase those great projects, we need your help. We are calling for nominations of economic development projects through June 16th. For more information on the project categories, details on how to submit a nomination, or who are winners were last year, visit our Edie page. The winners will be announced at our annual luncheon on September 28th!

For more information and application information, visit our [website](#).