

ICCTA ACTION ALERT

December 6, 2006

VETO SESSION UPDATE

The Illinois General Assembly has completed its work for the fall portion of the 2006 veto session. Very few issues affecting higher education were considered during the limited six-day session. Issues affecting community colleges and units of local government are listed later in this report.

Much of the veto session was focused on the issues of increasing the minimum wage and extending a 10-year utilities rate freeze. The utilities rate freeze did not pass and could be brought up for consideration in January 2007.

The House and the Senate will return to Springfield on January 7, 2007, for the final days of the 94th General Assembly. Lawmakers may continue with the business of the 94th General Assembly up until noon on January 10. When each house decides to conclude the business of the 94th General Assembly, all legislation that has not advanced through passage is declared "sine die" or dead. All retiring members of the General Assembly will then conclude their careers as legislators and must vacate their offices to make way for the newly elected members who will be seated for the 95th General Assembly. Upon the completion of the 94th General Assembly, new members elected during the November 2006 elections will be sworn in at noon on January 10, and the new two-year 95th General Assembly will commence.

In order to begin the 95th General Assembly, the Illinois Constitution requires that the Secretary of State preside over the organization of the House, and that the Governor preside over the organization of the Senate, which occurs on January 10, 2007. Once the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House are elected, the balance of the organizational process is continued until completed. It is expected that Emil Jones will continue as the President of the Senate and Michael Madigan will continue as Speaker of the House.

Because the Illinois State Capitol Building has been undergoing extensive renovations, the House has been conducting its session days in the Old State Capitol Building in the House chamber that was in service during the mid 1800's. The Senate has been meeting in the room at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library where ICCTA held its June convention seminar. The General Assembly is scheduled to return to these locations to conduct the session during January and possibly February 2007. Completion of the construction work to the State Capitol Building is expected later in the spring 2007 session.

LEGISLATION OF INTEREST TO COMMUNITY COLLEGES PASSED DURING THE VETO SESSION

The following is a listing of legislation that passed both houses of the General Assembly during the veto session. These four bills will be sent to the Governor for his consideration.

House Bill 4173 **Candidate Name Changes**
ICCTA Position: **MONITOR**

Amends the Election Code. Requires that if a candidate has changed his or her name during the 3 years before the deadline for filing nominating petitions, papers, or certificates, the candidate's name on his or her nominating petition, papers, or certificate and the ballot must include a reference to his or her former name or names and the date or dates of the name changes. Excludes certain name changes due to adoption or a change in marital status.

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Senate Bill 1268 Minimum Wage Increase

ICCTA Position: MONITOR

Increases the minimum wage in Illinois from \$6.50 to \$7.50 on July 1, 2007, \$7.75 on July 1, 2008, \$8.00 on July 1, 2009, and \$8.25 on July 1, 2010. Provides that, in lieu of the minimum wage, an employer may pay an employee, during the first 90 consecutive calendar days after the employee is initially employed by the employer, a wage that is not more than 50¢ less than the minimum wage. Changes cross-references in provisions authorizing the Director of Labor to provide by regulation for the employment of learners at a subminimum wage so they refer to the regular minimum wage and the minimum wage for employees under 18 years of age. In the opinion of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, this bill creates a personal mandate for which reimbursement of 100% of the increased costs to units of local government is required under the State Mandates Act. Effective July 1, 2007.

SB 1453 Bidding and Selection of Architects and Engineers

ICCTA Position: OPPOSE

Extends current state law to units of local government by requiring that the selection of architects and engineers be based upon the qualifications – not the cost – of their services. The bill specifically states, “In no case shall a political subdivision, prior to selecting a firm for negotiation under Section 7, seek formal or informal submission of verbal or written estimates of costs or proposals in terms of dollars, hours required, percentage of construction cost, or any other measure of compensation.”

SB 1856 Adult Education Technical Changes

ICCTA Position: SUPPORT

This clean-up legislation removes the last of statutory language referring to the Illinois State Board of Education in terms of governance of the state’s adult education programs. The Illinois Community College Board currently has governing authority over adult education programs.

ICCTA appreciates its many allies in the legislative arena. Special thanks are due to the Illinois Presidents Council, the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, and Women Employed.

■ For additional legislative updates, call ICCTA at 1-800-454-2282 ■