



Illinois Community College Trustees Association Action Alert
March 29, 2004

Calls needed to oppose HB 6843

*ICCTA opposes **House Bill 6843**, which would allow the Capital Development Board to assume control of higher education construction projects. HB 6843 is scheduled for a hearing on Thursday morning, April 1, in the House State Government Administration Committee. ICCTA will testify against passage of this bill in committee. If your district is represented by a member of the State Government Administration Committee, please call and ask them to vote **AGAINST HB 6843**:*

Members of the House State Government Administration Committee

Jack Franks, chair
Michael Smith, vice chair
Dan Brady
Rich Brauer
Linda Chapa LaVia
Naomi Jakobsson
Patricia Lindner
Rich Myers, minority spokesperson
Chapin Rose
Patrick Verschoore
Eddie Washington

For additional information, contact ICCTA at iccta@communitycolleges.org or 1-800-454-2282.

Some of the arguments against HB 6843 are listed in the following news article published by the Champaign-Urbana News-Gazette. (The web site link is: <http://www.news-gazette.com/story.cfm?Number=15697>):

UI fights to control projects

By KATE CLEMENTS
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SPRINGFIELD – Gov. Rod Blagojevich is pushing legislation that would allow his Capital Development Board to take control of all community college and state university construction projects.

The University of Illinois is fighting HB 6843, which would eliminate its ability to decide which architects, land surveyors, planners and contractors to use on university building and renovation projects.

"We are opposed to the bill as it currently stands," said Terrance McLennand, assistant director of state relations for the university. "We feel that we have a good track record of handling the projects. We don't necessarily feel that the process is broken to the point that we need to look at such a step."

The bill's sponsor, state Rep. Kurt Granberg, D-Carlyle, said the measure was a request of the governor's Capital Development Board.

"They just feel that they should have input since they are the ones who have ultimate control and responsibility for state projects," Granberg said. "It would actually give them control of the decision-making process and the selection of both architect and/or engineers."

The bill as written would give the Capital Development Board that power even if the building project is being paid for entirely or in part by private donations, which the UI said could discourage potential donors from making such gifts.

Granberg said that issue is the subject of ongoing discussions.

"We are working with CDB and with the universities trying to determine what the parameters of the legislation should be and what should be included in those, because there are going to be objections from private donors possibly to have the state have complete control of the process," he said. "We are negotiating on the bill."

Granberg said he expects to call the bill for a vote in the state government committee next week.

State Rep. Naomi Jakobsson, D-Urbana, said she has not decided how she will vote.

"I know that the language is being worked on, so I really want to wait and see," she said. "But I do know that the UI has a good track record of being on time, being on budget, and I think we also need to make sure we protect private donations that are given to the universities."

State Rep. Chapin Rose, R-Mahomet, who represents Eastern Illinois University, said he strongly opposes the bill.

"Why would we take decisions out of the hands of local contractors and local architectural firms and have Springfield do it?" he said. "It just doesn't make any sense."

Rose said the legislation could take jobs away from firms in and around university communities.

"The money needs to stay local," Rose said. "Coles County has one of the highest unemployment rates in downstate Illinois, and then you want Eastern to send all of its architectural design jobs to Springfield? Why on Earth would I be for that?"

House Republicans have come out against the bill, and are also fighting a measure to give the governor similar control over construction projects in elementary and secondary school districts. SB 3001 would give the Capital Development Board responsibility for hiring architects, engineers and builders for all projects in the state's school construction program.

House Minority Leader Tom Cross, R-Oswego, said the bills eliminate local control and could cost jobs and hurt local economies.

Other opponents have even suggested that the legislation is a way for the administration to reward businesses run by friends and contributors.

"I don't trust the governor's plan," said state Sen. Peter Roskam, R-Wheaton.

Capital Development Board Director Tony Rossi brushed aside concerns that the legislation would politicize the school construction program, saying the board has an established and fair selection process for choosing firms.

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