



ON THE

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MOVE

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On the Move

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ulterior motives drive Daley's attack on public employees

Service cuts curry favor with his well-heeled friends



BY HENRY BAYER

IF DALEY THINKS THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS SO GREAT, INSTEAD OF DENIGRATING PUBLIC SERVICES, HE SHOULD GO GET A JOB THERE.

Chicago's Mayor Daley thinks there are too many teachers, librarians, fire-fighters, people keeping our streets clean and our food and water safe.

ON THE OTHER HAND HE THINKS WE NEED MORE MANICURISTS, BLACKJACK DEALERS, TOBACCO farmers and fortune tellers.

Well, that's not what he actually said when he recently addressed his favorite constituency, the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, the business boys with the big bucks. But his famous father who preceded him in the mayor's office admonished the press to report what he meant, not what he said. I know what he said, and I'm darn sure I know what he meant.

What the younger Daley did say is that we need fewer public sector jobs and more jobs in the private sector. It's a sentiment that on first blush many people might agree with thanks to a steady drumbeat from right-wing politicians and media pundits whose idea of a good time is bloodying up public servants.

However, would we really be better off if the mayor's desire were fulfilled?

Though I don't use their services, or buy their products, I have nothing against manicurists, blackjack dealers, tobacco farmers or fortune tellers. And if folks want to avail themselves of these services, I don't have any problem with them doing so.

But don't try to tell me that our communities would be better places to live if there were more of them and fewer of us.

Of course, Daley and the other propagandists pushing the notion of the superiority

of the business sector might well respond that they weren't talking about the occupations I've noted. But you'll note that they're never too specific about just what private-sector jobs they do have in mind.

Perhaps they're thinking about jobs that produce consumer goods like automobiles, washing machines, home electronic devices and clothing, commodities that we all use and which historically provided good employment opportunities to millions of Americans (thanks in no small part to the heavy union density in those industries). Those jobs were vital to a healthy economy and the well-being of everyone.

The folks who worked at jobs in those sectors, not only were decently compensated for their labors, but thanks to the taxes they paid on their reasonable incomes and those they paid on the consumer purchases they were able to make with to those same salaries, governments generated the revenues needed to supply the health, education and public safety services that citizens wanted.

If those are the jobs Daley is talking about, he's apparently forgotten that with the help of his brother Bill, who shepherded NAFTA, the first in a long line of bad trade deals that have decimated the U.S. industrial base, through the Congress, those jobs no longer exist here in the heartland.

Many of the domestic jobs that remain have been creat-

ed in Daley's "new economy." By and large they don't provide the good wages and decent benefits of the now exported manufacturing work, nor do they provide even a modicum of retirement security.

However, Daley and his cronies aren't pursuing a strategy of restoring the private sector to the compensation levels that produced the largest middle class and made the American economy the envy of the world. Instead they propose to even out the disparities between the public and private sector by driving down the benefits for those of us in the public sector. They want a world in which everyone except those at the very top is forced to get by on a lot less.

After beating down compensation in the private sector, their sights are now set on us.

Thus the unrelenting assault on our pensions and the demands that we pay more for our insurance when we retire.

By their logic if one man lost a limb, rather than provide him with a prosthetic, these guys would lop off a limb from everyone else. If some folks can only see through one eye, then everybody should have limited eyesight.

Of course building resentment against decently compensated workers also serves as a convenient distraction, diverting attention from the obscene levels of salaries, bonuses and perks that the corporate chieftains who've sold off so many American jobs lavish on themselves.

If Daley thinks the private sector is so great, instead of denigrating public services, he should go get a job there.

Governor expected to sign bad-news budget

Reading to face the damage being done to public services by a longstanding structural budget deficit and a shrinking stream of existing revenues, state legislators passed a budget that will cause devastating cuts and widespread job losses.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SENT TO THE GOVERNOR A \$26.3 BILLION GENERAL REVENUE FUND budget for fiscal 2011, a 5 percent cut from the \$27.7 billion appropriated last year. The budget carries forward an estimated \$13 billion deficit, leaving the search for solutions to the problems created by that huge hole for after this November's election.

And the situation could get even worse. Federal aid for states in the form of increased Medicaid grants is now in jeopardy, with Republicans and some conservative Democrats teaming up in opposition. That could deepen Illinois' budget hole by another \$700 million.

Those problems have already hit hard, with local governments cutting programs and laying off employees, state-funded non-profit agencies doing the same, and state universities stretched simply to make payroll as they wait for the hundreds of millions of dollars owed them by the deadbeat state. Schools are laying off teachers. Doctors and hospitals are refusing to treat patients covered by the state's health insurance program as the payment lag continues to lengthen.

Though the budget effective July 1 necessitates deep cuts, state employees are somewhat insulated – at least from layoffs. They have one more year of a no-layoff, no-facility-closures agreement that the union forged in settlement of grievances filed last year. The grievances challenged the state's plan for major layoffs on the basis that it would make prisons significantly less safe and violate restrictions on contracting out union work. As part of the settlement, employees deferred 1 percent wage increases and are participating in a voluntary furlough

plan.

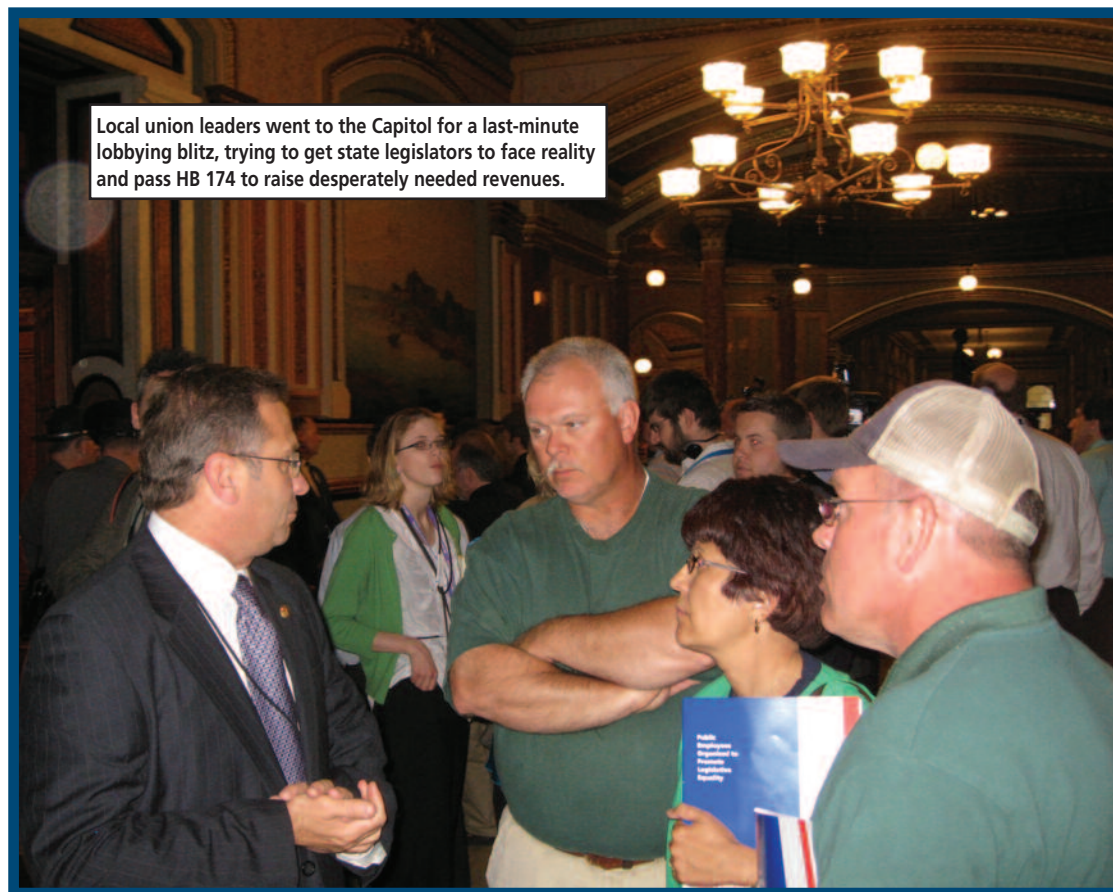
But the new budget could be devastating for private-sector agencies that provide developmental disability services. They face a 2.5 percent cut from last year's already inadequate appropriation. Gov. Pat Quinn could use the extraordinary budgeting powers the General Assembly gave to restore the cuts, or he could make them even deeper. And even without budget cuts, payment delays will lengthen beyond the current six months, forcing some community agencies to the brink of closure.

The governor planned to cut mental health agencies by 40 percent. If he follows through on that plan, it could spell disaster for the city of Chicago mental health clinics, among others.

Devil is in the details; details are missing

As On the Move went to press, the governor had not yet signed the budget bills sent to him by the legislature, though he has indicated he will do so. Those bills:

- Cut state operations that are funded principally from the General Revenue Fund by 5 percent from last year's budget;
- Exempt state universities, the state Education and Higher Education boards, the Student Assistance Commission, constitutional officers and courts and related entities from the 5-percent cut, though the state does not have the revenue to back up even the appropriations contained in the budget;
- Also exempt agencies that are mostly not funded by the GRF, like Employment Security, Environmental Protection, the Commerce Commission, Transportation and other smaller agencies.
- Appropriated community providers of mental health and developmental disability services at half of their 2009 level;
- Gave the governor \$3.47 billion to restore some or all of the cuts;
- Gave the governor the power, under the Emergency Budget Act, to make whatever cuts he deems necessary, even if the expenditures are required by other state laws;
- Leave unpaid the \$3.5 billion owed this year for state-funded pensions;
- Leave the Department of Human Services \$1.5 billion



short of last year's appropriation;

- Do nothing to pay off the \$1.4 billion owed to school districts from last year's appropriation; and
- Leave another \$4.5 billion in unpaid obligations the state has accumulated by gradually increasing the time it takes to pay what it owes.

"With all the authority the General Assembly has vested in the governor this year, we will not know the true impact of the budget until Gov. Quinn reveals his plans for restorations and further cuts," Council 31 public policy director Anne Irving said.

Pension systems owed \$3.5 billion

The plan to borrow \$4.1 billion to pay the interest on previous pension borrowing and make the legally required fiscal 2011 payment to pension systems remained in

limbo as On the Move went to press.

In the Senate, every Republican and two Democrats were refusing to go along with a House-passed borrowing authorization. A proposal to skip the payment temporarily also failed to pass legislative muster.

Without any action, this \$300 million a month that the state owes to the pension systems under the State Pension Funds Continuing Appropriation Act will simply extend the already burdensome payment backlog, which was already approaching \$6 billion, or result in even more massive cuts to vital services at every level of government.

"An appropriation is no longer a funding commitment in Illinois, when there is

Until the state raises revenues, the budget hole just gets deeper and deeper.

not enough state revenue to meet all of the funding commitments in the budget," Council 31 legislative director

Joanna Webb-Gauvin said. "School districts are already seeing the harm caused by the state's failure to provide the funding it promised, as they are in the process of laying off thousands of teachers and support personnel and struggling to manage their finances while the state owes them \$1.4 billion, with little prospect of being paid during the current fiscal year.

"Unless and until the state raises revenues along the lines of HB 174, the budget hole just gets deeper and deeper, and the threat to vital programs grows."

Local government locals challenged by layoffs



The economic crunch is hitting hard as revenues continue to drop for county and municipal governments, school and park districts and other public entities across Illinois.

COUPLED WITH THE STATE LEGISLATURE'S STEADFAST REFUSAL TO RAISE TAXES, THE IMPACT REVERBERATES through every government entity. It has put local unions on the defensive as they seek to preserve both the integrity of the bargaining process and the job security of their members.

In many cases the choices local unions confront are wrenching: save jobs or give up some of the gains they have fought so hard to win for their members. Others get no such choice, forced to react only after management announces layoffs.

That was the case for AFSCME Local 2050 when the Springfield Park District sent out a one-month notice for 21 layoffs.

"They have a big plan to cut everything down to seasonal employees," said an angry Brian Schroeder, the local's president. "We tried to bargain. We offered concessions."

Seasonal employees in the park district have no benefits and much lower wages than full-timers. In bargaining over the impact of the layoffs, the local gained agreement from the district to give the laid-off employees first choice on the newly opened seasonal slots. Those who took them will get the same wages through the end of the season, and get their vacation time. They will not get pension credit, health insurance or holiday pay. They will get recall rights to any permanent vacancy that opens up.

To add insult to injury, some of the work — mowing, trimming, tree planting — is now being done by volunteers.

"It's pretty insulting, but some are staying," Schroeder said. "They will be taking 55 percent to 70 percent pay cuts," if they work beyond this summer, he noted.

The experience has been a lesson in politics for local union members, who have learned that the park board president is running for mayor next year.

In its fight to save the jobs, the local took 70 members to a park board meeting, but "We couldn't sway them," Schroeder said. "It was a wake-up call. We're going to get more political and work to get some people on the board who have our interests in mind. We've already got a couple of people who want to run and are willing to work with us."

Iroquois County workers take equal share of pain

THE IROQUOIS COUNTY BOARD was threatening to lay off every non-public-safety employee, or require one furlough day a week and raise health insurance premiums from \$20 a month to around \$300.

The problem stems partly from the state, which is late on disbursements from the Local Government Distributive Fund. In wrestling with this and other fiscal problems, board members were trying to set unreasonable deadlines for bargaining and saying things like, "We should furlough people;" and "Pressure the unions;" or "We've already spent \$1.5 million of next year's money in the first six months of this year."

But some board members were more reasonable: "We have to decide what is going to be done and then negotiate with the unions about this."

Eventually saner heads prevailed and the board sat down to discuss the problems with the union.

"They said they needed 638 work days from us," explained Council 31 staff representative Rick Prince.

One County Board member proposed offering layoffs to senior employees first, as industrial unions have negotiated when factories are cutting back.

Members of Local 3312 didn't want furloughs, because it would be a steep cut in pay.



Champaign County management is using layoff threats as a bargaining chip in contract negotiations, but Local 900 is fighting back.

And they didn't want to pay large health-insurance premiums. Instead they proposed 22 layoff days for each member of the bargaining unit — so the time off would be continuous and those on layoff would be able to collect unemployment compensation benefits.

The county agreed. The layoffs will be staggered, and the local union president was able to participate in scheduling, so individual members' interests would be taken into consideration.

Decatur raises deferred

LAYOFFS AT THE DECATUR PUBLIC LIBRARY earlier this year were only the beginning. The city, with a shrinking population base that has cut into revenues, continues to look for ways to save money.

In April it announced seven more layoffs of AFSCME members.

"We gave them a proposal that would have saved people from being laid off," Local 268 President Jerd Morstatter said. "They rejected it."

But the local continued to negotiate, eventually agreeing to a one-year contract extension; deferring 1 percent of a three-percent wage increase until the extended year. Laid-off workers get expanded recall rights and the right to test into jobs in other classifications. Eventually there were five layoffs and one worker retired.

"They wanted to reopen the contract, but we didn't fall for that — the membership voted against it," Morstatter said. But "We thought it would be prudent to save as many jobs as we could."

Response in the local media was positive. One column, by a former mayor, said AFSCME's agreement "was a positive move for all concerned. ... There's no question that making a few concessions now will be important leverage in negotiations in a few years when, hopefully the city's financial condition improves. The City of Decatur's three unions must be concerned with saving the jobs of their members, more than pay increases ... The move by AFSCME is a smart move."

Layoffs averted in Joliet

WHEN LOCAL 440 WAS NOTIFIED that the city of Joliet planned to lay off 68 workers, it put in a demand to bargain over the impact.

The bargaining yielded an agreement in which the city withdrew the layoff notices and agreed to no layoffs through the end of 2011. The local agreed to defer a 4.5-percent wage increase for 11 months and each employee would take six furlough days — a package worth nearly \$1.4 million.

"Our members voted two to one to make the concessions," said John Dillon, the

local union president. "With people attacking public employees all over the country, we thought the impression we made on the public was important."

He said the city "has been coming at us for 18 months, wanting more for health insurance and contract concessions. We did well by fighting for so long. It would have been worse except all the unions stuck together. Hopefully we can keep that."

He said police and fire unions were told that they shouldn't worry, because the city was just trying to get concessions from AFSCME. "We all stepped up and backed one another. They came to a City Council meeting and said 'If you take from them you are taking from us.' Otherwise they would have gotten deeper into our pockets."

Champaign County has had small numbers of layoffs and tried to implement furloughs in the Head Start program without bargaining with the union. Contract negotiations are ongoing, with the union seeking a no-layoff agreement and management pushing for concessions.

The cities of Mattoon and Champaign are in contract bargaining with the union, seeking concessions and threatening layoffs.

In Evanston Local 1891 just settled a one-year contract that city officials has said would avert layoffs for the current fiscal year, but they would not put it into the contract. Union members ratified an agreement with a wage freeze, a 10-percent increase in monthly insurance premiums and four furlough days.

And with new layoff threats or notices coming in almost every week in local governments all across the state, anyone who says public employees aren't suffering from the recession isn't on the front lines.

"It's clear that the situation is not going to self-correct," Council 31 Director Henry Bayer said. "Local unions will have to intensify their resolve to hold their elected officials accountable and insist on the generation of new revenues from all sources — federal, state and local. That's the only way to protect our members from the havoc wreaked by irresponsible politicians who evidence concern for only one job — their own."

Limits on forced overtime effective on July 1

A crucial date in the memorandum of agreement between AFSCME and the Quinn administration on mandatory overtime has arrived.

EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2010 FOR FACILITIES OPERATED BY THE DEPARTMENTS OF CORRECTIONS, Juvenile Justice, Human Services, and Veterans Affairs: "Employees shall not be disciplined for refusing a mandate to work overtime hours unless such mandate occurs in unforeseen or unusual circumstances beyond the control of the Employer, including unexpected absences discovered at the commencement of a shift," the MOU says.

The fact that a facility does not have an adequate number of employees to fully schedule each shift is not an "unforeseen or unusual circumstance," nor is a facility's failure to take into account scheduled time off, Council 31 Associate Director Mike Newman explained.

At many facilities, mandatory overtime has become management's crutch, a tool of first resort for dealing with chronic understaffing. The agreement will force a change, making it a tool of last resort.

Where to draw the line

"AT FIRST, STATE EMPLOYEES will have to feel their way into the transition," Newman said. "In some places, management will push the limits, and there are some areas where the union and management may disagree about the meaning of the MOU."

For example, every facility knows there will be a certain number of call-offs every day. The union does not consider the normal amount of call-offs to be an unforeseen or unusual circumstance. Management should maintain staffing levels sufficient to account for the normal number of days off.

"We may find that some issues have to be resolved through the grievance procedure," Newman said. "Some managers may try to ignore the memorandum and try to act like it's business as usual. But after we've won a few grievances, they will learn

they have to live by the provisions of this agreement."

Employees who are told that refusing to work overtime will bring about discipline, and who believe such a refusal is permitted by the memorandum, should:

- Immediately ask for a union representative. If the employer is threatening discipline, employees have an absolute right to representation.
- Ask what the reason is for the mandate.
- Find out what the unusual circumstance is.
- Determine whether the circumstance is unforeseen or unexpected.

Overtime: No way to run a facility

"IF THE EMPLOYER INSISTS, YOU could initially face discipline, and the possibility of having to go through the grievance procedure to try getting the discipline removed," Newman said. "And there are some limited circumstances under which employees can still be mandated."

But the language is strong. Deciding whether or not to refuse under these circumstances is ultimately a decision that employees will

have to make for themselves.

Generally, when an order is clearly and indisputably beyond the authority of the employer, discipline for refusing that order will be overturned in the grievance and arbitration procedure. There will be some disagreement between the union and management, especially while the memorandum is still new.

"The right to refuse overtime is unknown territory for both parties," Newman cautioned. But, he added, "Employees are committed to their jobs, and want their facilities to operate well. They have always been willing to volunteer for a reasonable amount of overtime, and there is every reason to believe that they will continue to do so. Management's freedom to mandate overtime as a substitution for proper staffing levels was not good for the operation of the facilities, and put a tremendous strain on the lives of employees."

Gaining a voice on staffing

"NONE OF THE AGENCIES HAVE completely met their hiring

requirements," Newman said, referring to the provision of the agreement that commits the agencies to add staff in order to avoid overtime. But he noted that DOC/DJJ and DHS have made significant progress while DVA "appears not to have taken the memorandum seriously."

Another feature of the memorandum requires each of the four departments to give the union monthly reports, which must include the numbers of: inmates or residents; frontline staff; overtime hours worked, including overtime hours worked by each individual working overtime; and mandatory overtime hours worked.

This will allow the union to track the progress of compliance with the agreement, Newman said.

The reports have been coming in since last June, and show mixed progress in cutting down on the overtime, with most facilities on a downward trend.

Still, Newman said, "This agreement is a breakthrough. The state is finally engaged in addressing staffing issues with the union. We've fought for a voice on staffing for many years. Now we have one."

A look at the record: U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk earns a failing grade

From workers' rights to form a union, to Medicare privatization, to health care reform, to aid for state and local governments struggling from the economic crisis, to tax breaks for the wealthy and jobs for the unemployed, U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, has carved out a voting record showing him to be far from a friend of working families.

AS AFSCME MEMBERS CONTEMPLATE THE UPCOMING ELECTION, AND TRY TO FERRET OUT THE truth from sound bites, claims and counter claims, there are a number of candidates whose voting records paint a very clear picture of who they

are. "We have learned over the years that, while there's no perfect formula for deciding who deserves our support, voting together and voting on our interests as workers, has given us a more powerful

voice to speak on issues that affect our livelihood," said John Cameron, Council 31 director of political and community affairs. "And the best predictor of a politician's future is his or her past behavior, which is why we rely so heavily on voting records."

At the top of this year's ticket is the contest for who will replace Roland Burris as U.S. senator from Illinois. Kirk, the Republican candidate, has a voting record he's established as a congressman from the northeastern corner of the state.

Though AFSCME will not consider endorsements until the September PEOPLE conference, Kirk's measly 20 percent cumulative voting record

on AFSCME's Legislative Scorecard will no doubt weigh heavily in the delegates' decision.

Kirk took office in 2001. Since then he has voted against the collective interests of AFSCME members on a number of crucial issues.

Workers' rights and the right to form a union

WHEN THE HOUSE PASSED THE Employee Free Choice Act,



which would make it easier for workers to form a union and weaken management's ability

to stop organizing drives with anti-union tactics, Kirk voted NO.

He also said NO on the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would make it easier for women to seek legal remedies when they have been victims

University administration goes to school

Local teaches employer about Americans with Disabilities Act

When a long-time employee, recovering from back surgery returned to work at the Northeastern Illinois University Library, her boss said if she couldn't do the job, she'd have to quit.

“SHE WAS A HARD WORKER WITH 17 YEARS, AND SHE'D ALWAYS HAD STUDENT WORKERS TO help,” said Ellen Larrimore, Local 1989 president. But the cash-strapped university has cut back on student workers, so the bosses wanted the library specialist to do it all on her own, despite doctor's limitations on reaching too high or too low to put books back or take them off shelves.

“She didn't know the law was on her side and didn't know the union could help,” Larrimore said. “I told her not to go to any more meetings with management without a union representative.”

“They were initially unwilling to make any accommodations for her,” Larrimore



said, “but they were much more cordial once we were participating.”

Apparently the library management was unaware of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which requires an employer to make “reasonable accommodations” so that disabled individuals can do their jobs.

Management referred

the employee and her union representatives to the equal employment opportunity officer, whose job is to assure university compliance with federal labor laws. But he was unfamiliar with the ADA and its mandate.

There was a reasonable accommodation available: help from a student worker.

Federal law extends broad rights to those with disabilities

A PERSON IS COVERED BY THE Americans with Disabilities Act if he or she:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
 - Has a record of such an impairment; or
 - Is regarded as having such an impairment.
- Coercing, threatening or retaliating against a disabled person who is asserting his or her rights under the ADA is prohibited.

A covered employer must provide reasonable accommodations to protect

the rights of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of employment. Possible changes may include:

- Making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities;
- Job restructuring, modifying work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position; and
- Acquiring or modifying equipment or devices, adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies and providing qualified readers or interpreters.

“You have to do this,” Council 31 staff representative Karmen Ortlhoff said. “It's the law.”

Ortlhoff referred the university representative to the JAN, the Job Accommodation Network, <http://askjan.org>, a service provided by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, which offers

“guidance on workplace accommodations.”

“They thanked me for steering them toward that resource,” Ortlhoff said. “She's going to get a helper and she'll continue to be a valuable resource for the university library and the students of Northeastern.”

Administration still pushing toward DJJ merger

The proposed merger of the Department of Juvenile Justice into the Department of Children and Family Services is moving “from idea to implementation” with little consideration of what effect these profound policy changes would have and without legislative authority.

The merger transition group, as it is being called, is not “seeking to determine the systems and structures that can best improve outcomes for adjudicated youth,” Council 31 Director Henry Bayer wrote in a letter to the group's chair. “As the process is set up, not only is there scant opportunity to explore the potential risks that such a merger might pose for

the juvenile justice system, there is also not the slightest opportunity — nor any apparent concern — to grapple with the risk that it poses to the extremely vulnerable children who are in the care of DCFS.”

Because of this, Bayer said, the union will participate in the so-called work groups that have been set up, “only to improve the systems serving adjudicated youth, not in any way sanction or foster the merger process.”

The merger would already have happened but for Council 31's efforts, noted the union's public policy director Anne Irving.

The administration had embarked on a course to enact

the “knee-jerk scheme before June 1,” she said. But AFSCME was able to slow down the process by enlisting the help of legislators, who shared union members' concerns that both agencies' missions could be compromised.

As a result the administration agreed not to go forward without legislative approval. Then it set up a process to involve youth advocates, DCFS and DJJ management, and legislative staff to discuss DJJ issues and come up with proposed solutions. The union was also asked to participate.

But the administration has so far made no effort “to offer substantive arguments to make the case that the merger is nec-

essary or advisable,” Bayer said. “We would expect such a policy change to be pursued through meetings and hearings where the advantages would be articulated, the problems and concerns addressed, and all stakeholders allowed to share their views. Here we seem to have skipped a step, moving from idea to implementation without the normal process for review and discussion.”

The merger could again put off finding real solutions for the problems encountered by the state's system for dealing with delinquent youths — the high recidivism rate being the most glaring of these.

“The Department of Juvenile Justice was created just three and a half years ago with a promise that the new department would draw more resources,” Irving said. “But those resources never materialized, and the vast majority of more than 200 AFSCME members who responded to a recent union survey say the youth centers are worse off now than before the creation of DJJ.”

In that respect, the current work group could play a positive

role, she said. Discussions on getting State Board of Education funding for the DJJ school district would be very helpful. “But it's not clear how the merger will help secure such funding.”

So while the union has agreed to participate in the merger transition group's process, Bayer said, “We want to be very clear that our participation is not intended in any way to signify our agreement with or acquiescence to the merger. Our members in both agencies feel very strongly that this merger will be detrimental to the services they are charged with providing.” Thus, “We intend to continue to utilize all available opportunities to speak out in opposition to it.”

“We have here yet another example of politicians trying to give the appearance of doing something, while doing nothing,” Irving said. “It's a crime that self-proclaimed advocates for youth worry more about their next foundation grant to keep themselves employed than they do about rehabilitating the lives of youth and setting them on a path to employment.”

Legislature goes home with work undone

The Illinois General Assembly went home without finishing up the business before them, failing to enact the tax increases needed so that Illinois can pay its bills and provide vital services.

THEY PASSED A BUDGET FOR THE COMING FISCAL YEAR WITH A HUGE AND GROWING DEFICIT and went home, leaving it up to Gov. Pat Quinn to make the draconian cuts that will be needed to bring it into balance.

To make matters worse they couldn't agree on legislation to ensure that the state makes the pension contributions needed to prevent the SERS, SURS and TRS pension funds from falling even further into fiscal disrepair. "All in all, it was a session of political cowardice like few we've seen," Council 31 deputy director Roberta Lynch said. "The bipartisan dirty deal they cut slashed public employee pensions for all those hired after Jan. 1, and left the door wide open for a frontal assault on the pensions of current employees."

Pension borrowing – the lesser evil

AFSCME IS RELUCTANTLY SUPPORTING a Quinn administration plan to borrow \$4 billion in order to make the requisite pension contributions this year.

"Borrowing is costly and irresponsible, adding to the state's already burdensome debt," Council 31 legislative director Joanna Webb-Gauvin said. "But the union sees the alternatives as even worse."

The Senate passed a "pension holiday" simply putting off making the required pension contribution for this year, a move that would cost the state far more in the long run than borrowing.

Left as it is now, the state is still required to make the contributions, but without borrowing. The funds for that would be taken from money that is now targeted to education, human services, public safety and other vital public services.

The House turned down the pension holiday and passed borrowing legislation, but as On the Move went to press, there was not enough Senate support to guarantee passage. Without that guarantee, neither the governor nor legislative leaders appeared ready to call the General Assembly back into session.

Governor faces many decisions

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DID take action on a number of bills of importance to AFSCME members that have been sent to the governor, who could sign, veto or exercise his amendatory veto on these measures.

Council 31 is urging the governor to sign the following bills.

Keep personnel records private

HB 5154 WOULD BAR PUBLIC access to public-employee performance evaluations. The union initiated this bill to counter action in the last legislative session, when the freedom of information law was revised to make the performance evaluation of any public employee working for any jurisdiction in the state of Illinois, except for teachers and school officials, available to any citizen who requests it. HB 5154 would effectively nullify that provision and keep public-employee performance evaluations confidential.

Wage hike for community agency workers

SB 3291 ALLOWS FOR STATE funding to be appropriated for negotiated wage increases in agencies providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

No pension losses for those taking furloughs

HB 4644, WHICH WAS BACKED by AFSCME and the Quinn administration pursuant to the mediated grievance resolution, ensures that state employees are permitted to purchase pension credit for up to 12 furlough days.

Legal protections for EMTs

HB5668 WOULD EXTEND CORE workplace due-process rights

under the provisions of the Firemen's Discipline Act to emergency medical technicians and paramedics who work for local units of government.

Improve conditions in nursing homes

SB 326 WOULD STRENGTHEN oversight of nursing homes in Illinois, including mandating the hiring of additional state inspectors to ensure that regulations are enforced.

Aid for Fairmount Race Track

SB 735 WOULD IMPROVE THE financial stability of Fairmount Race Track, where AFSCME-represented employees have faced a difficult bargaining climate because of lack of adequate funds.

Laid off employees can purchase pension credits

HB 5262 WOULD PROVIDE A WINDOW for state employees who have been laid off to purchase pension credit for the time during which they were not working.

Strengthen payday loan regulation

HB 537 would set interest-rate limits on small consumer loans and improve the oversight of the payday loan industry, which has too often exploited those in vulnerable situations.

AFSCME is urging the governor to use his amendatory veto power on the following two bills.

Protecting state employees' work from privatization

UNDER **HB 5242**, THE DEPARTMENT of Health and Family Services could contract with third-party entities to conduct "payment recapture audits." The sponsors of the legislation assured AFSCME that it was not intended to supplant any work that is already being done by AFSCME members, but the union does not believe the legislation is sufficiently clear on this score. With an amendatory veto the governor could clarify the legislation so that it will not allow private vendors to perform bargaining unit work.

DJJ merger at issue

UNDER **HB 5913** THE DEPARTMENT of Juvenile Justice would share certain administrative services with other agencies. On its surface, it does not appear objectionable, but some on the governor's staff have cited it as the first step in implementing the DJJ merger into the Department of Children and Family Services. With an amendatory veto Quinn could clarify that this measure is not intended to implement the merger.

AFSCME is urging the governor to veto the following two bills.

A privatization initiative

UNDER **HB 4836**, THE SO-called "Sunshine Commission" would bring in private-sector business people to review all aspects of state government and make recommendations for change, which would almost certainly include privatizing state services.

STAR Bonds rob state revenues

SB 2093 WOULD PROVIDE A MASSIVE state tax subsidy for developers seeking to build an entertainment complex in the Marion area. It sets a bad precedent by allowing the state treasury to be tapped for local development incentives, which have previously always depended only on local property tax breaks. And it does so at a time when the state of Illinois is desperately short of revenues.

The Council 31 lobbying team was successful in defeating or derailing a number of measures that would have been detrimental to the interests of AFSCME members, including the following six bills.

Endangering school-district jobs

HB 4886 WOULD ALLOW LOCAL school boards to establish a four-day school week, which

Retirees beat back insurance premium hikes

In the face of this spring's vigorous grassroots lobbying campaign by AFSCME Retiree Chapter 31, the Quinn administration backed off plans to unilaterally impose drastically higher health-insurance premiums on state and university retirees. (See page 14 for details.)

would effectively cut the pay and benefits of school-support personnel such as bus drivers, cafeteria workers and classroom aides.

Tollway privatization

SB 3802/HB 4623 would radically alter road planning and building in Illinois, permitting private entities to construct new roads, as well as privatize existing ones. AFSCME and other concerned parties worked to negotiate a compromise and had secured an agreement that the existing toll roads would be exempted, but the discussions broke down and the legislation did not move.

work to negotiate a compromise and had secured an agreement that the existing toll roads would be exempted, but the discussions broke down and the legislation did not move.

Slowing the transfer of violent inmates

SB 2588 WOULD PREVENT THE Department of Corrections from acting swiftly to transfer inmates when violent incidents occur, instead requiring that all transfers be approved by the Prisoner Review Board.

Benefit cuts for workers injured on the job

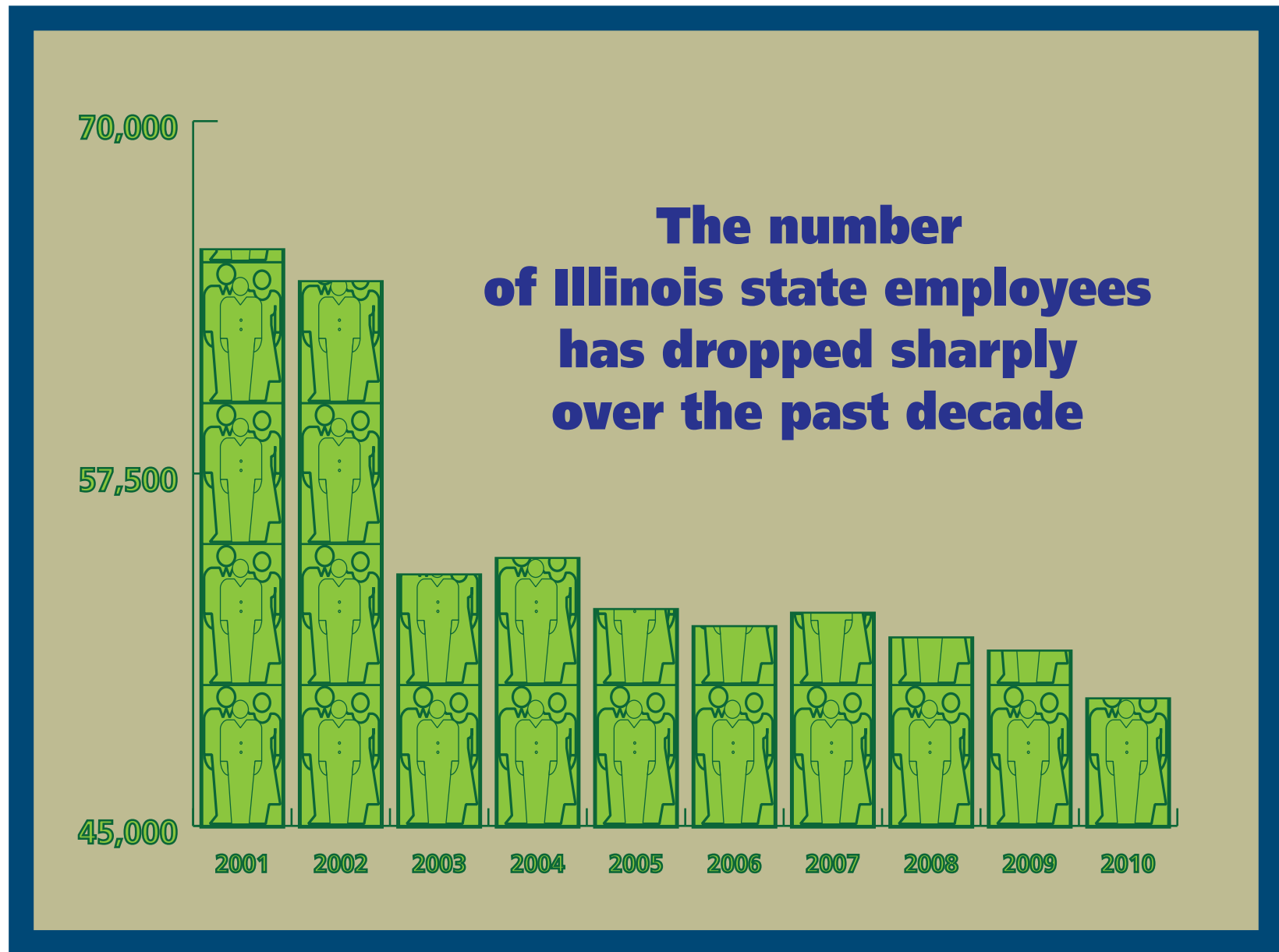
SB 3830 WOULD MAKE IT EASIER for employers to cut off benefits for workers who suffer on-the-job injuries so serious that they are off work for more than two years.

Strip tuition waiver for university employees' children

HB 4706 WOULD REPEAL THE law that permits children of state university employees to receive a 50-percent tuition waiver.

A total state hiring freeze

HB 5541 WOULD IMPOSE A total hiring freeze on state government until the state is able to pay all of its vendors monies owed within 30 days of billing. Given the state's current fiscal woes, this bill would effectively paralyze state government, preventing even the most essential positions from being filled.



ATTACKS ON PUBLIC SECT

Thirty years of relentless attacks on government are taking their toll, as the operatives who carry out corporate America's political agenda seek to exploit the current economic crisis.

Hundreds of millions of corporate dollars go into blogs, mass media outlets, think tanks like the Heritage Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute, and political action groups like Grover Norquist's Americans for Tax Reform.

The money has spun off such platforms as the "American Thinker" website, which published this screed in June:

"Governments — city, county, state, and federal — are drowning in red ink. Our taxes are flowing to ever-voracious government workers (whose own ranks are growing steadily while the private payrolls shrink)...

"Public employee unions will spend millions to try to defeat measures to rein in their bloated salaries and pension benefits. ... Politicians should require government workers to bite the bullet, as the rest of us have. ... Why not require them to chip in more to cover health expenses and pension benefits? Why not mandate that all new hires accept lower salaries and pension benefits that are more

in line with private pay? And privatize...always privatize."

Making public employees into villains

If the above is any indication, and it is, the big shots are getting their money's worth from the propaganda machine they bankroll.

The anti-government line is spreading throughout mainstream media. Take this May 28 article in the California newspaper the Modesto Bee, headlined, "Poor likely to pay for state workers' generous benefits."

Pitting state employees against those who depend on state services, the article says the public is "increasingly angry as they watch services cut while payouts for lavish state and local government pensions soar. If California is ever to emerge from its budget crisis, something must be done to lower pension costs.

"State pension contributions will gobble up almost \$4 billion of the general fund this year, a staggering increase of more than 2,000 percent over the last decade, according to governor's office. So as current workers face layoffs, safety net programs are decimated and education is

slashed, pension costs go up and up."

The false implication is that pension costs are rising because public employees and their unions are extracting unreasonable new benefits from gullible politicians. The truth is that the politicians have been skipping pension payments for many years.

Ignoring the possibility of raising new revenues, the article suggests that the only alternative to cutting wages and benefits is pain for the vulnerable: "The governor says that to balance the budget, he must either scale back pay and pension benefits or drastically cut support for the poor, elderly, disabled and children."

Tax rates are falling

Despite what is quickly becoming conventional wisdom — that government has run amok and government employees are grossly overpaid — the facts tell a different story. It isn't spending that has skyrocketed, but rather revenues that have dropped, despite an increasing need for government services.

"Americans paid their lowest level of taxes last year since Harry Truman's presidency," according to a USA TODAY article that analyzed federal data. "Fed-

The argument that people want less government generally falls apart when you get down to specifics.

Drowning government in a bathtub

Grover Norquist, at one time the chief economist and speech writer for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, has made a highly visible and successful career as an early architect of the anti-government movement, famously saying: "I don't want to abolish government. I simply want to reduce it to the size where I can drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the bathtub."

Using his tax-cutting crusade to gain fame and influence, Norquist has become the coordinator of many right wing causes – including opposition to health care reform. He's the author of the "Taxpayer Protection Pledge" that had been signed by 172 members of the U.S. House of Representatives and 34 members of the U.S. Senate as of July 30, 2009.

Norquist's varied interests are fed by wealthy donors, like the Mellon fortune, which is built on ownership of Gulf Oil Corporation, Alcoa and Alcan (going back to 1891), ownership of Koppers and Carborundum corporations and a uranium cartel. A foundation that also kicks in is financed by profits from the Olin chemical and munitions fortune.

The fabulous wealth that supports Norquist has a much broader agenda than making government smaller. As the pro-government website governmentisgood.com says, some Norquist allies "simply invoke anti-government rhetoric as a way of promoting their own self-interest." For example, in debates about health care reform, drug companies and the health insurance industry have constantly raised the specter of "government bureaucrats controlling your health care decisions." But the real agenda was to scare people away from reform plans that might cut into corporate profits and prevent insurance bureaucrats from making decisions that should be made by doctors.

And tobacco companies, who are constantly fighting off government regulators to protect their own profits, are notably on board, with R.J. Reynolds and Phillip Morris giving to Norquist through their tax-exempt foundations.

"The whole anti-government campaign has become a very handy way for some groups to disguise the true intentions of their policies and to deflect likely public opposition," said Douglas J. Amy, Professor of Politics at Mount Holyoke College.

FOR INTENSIFY

eral, state and local taxes — including income, property, sales and other taxes — consumed 9.2 percent of all personal income in 2009, the lowest rate since 1950.... That rate is far below the historic average of 12 percent for the last half-century."

And a study by the Center for State and Local Government Excellence found that employees of state government earn an average of 11 percent less than comparable private-sector employees, while local government workers get 12 percent less. The study compared public- and private-sector wages, taking into consideration education, training, experience, job location and occupation, among other factors. Even with benefits added in, private-sector workers come out ahead.

And in Illinois, government has been getting smaller. The number of state employees has gone from 65,456 in 2001 to 49,525 at the beginning of this fiscal year (see graph).

The public wants government services

The argument that people want less government generally falls apart when you get down to specifics. In recent

polling, significant majorities favor such government functions as: protecting national security; providing roads and sewers, parks and recreation, and other essential infrastructure facilities; educating children; preventing economic depressions; battling serious diseases; ensuring food and drug safety, drinkable water and breathable air; dispensing justice; providing retirement security; preventing business abuses; promoting scientific and medical research; feeding the hungry; recalling unsafe products, enforcing workplace regulations and reducing workplace injuries and deaths; responding to disasters and emergencies; preventing crime and protecting civil liberties; rescuing endangered species; caring for the elderly, maintaining social security and so on.

But try to argue for increasing revenues to pay for these and other popular programs, and the propaganda machine rolls out the attacks on public employees, their wages and benefits.

"We have a huge challenge ahead of us if we are to protect our members' jobs and maintain a government that provides the vital services Illinois residents want and need," Council 31 Director Henry Bayer said.

Daley silent on city pension shortfall

Special commission recommends increased contributions to city of Chicago systems

The city of Chicago has been delinquent in keeping its employees' pension funds on sound financial footing, and the sooner it begins to redress the shortfall, the better off taxpayers will be.

THAT WAS ONE CONCLUSION OF A REPORT ISSUED ON APRIL 30 BY THE COMMISSION TO STRENGTHEN Chicago's Pension Funds established by Mayor Richard Daley more than two years ago. But as of mid-June the mayor had barely acknowledged the commission report, and his only comments have been dismissive.

"The financial health of each of the city's four pension funds has deteriorated due to increasing liabilities, inadequate contributions, ... and adverse market conditions," the report said.

A key finding was that, as a result of this deterioration, an additional \$710 million a year must be added to current yearly contributions of \$793 million, \$313 million of which is paid by plan participants themselves.

If those amounts are adjusted regularly for rising salaries and inflation, using

expert actuarial findings to reach the correct figures, the funds will, over 50 years, be brought up to 90 percent of their accumulated liabilities, from the current 43 percent.

Daley backs second pension tier

THOUGH UNION REPRESENTATIVES had expressed a willingness to discuss modifications in benefits, employer and employee contributions, new revenue sources, retirement age and other relevant matters, they insisted that these issues should be addressed in a single package. Yet Daley lent his full support to SB 1946, the bill passed by the General Assembly and signed by the governor, that imposed significant benefit reductions and increases in the retirement age for new hires covered by the Municipal Workers and Laborers

funds, in which AFSCME members who are city of Chicago employees participate.

That bill "utterly fails to address the root cause of the pension funding crisis, which is the systematic underfunding," said Council 31 Director Henry Bayer, who served on the commission. Its enactment "calls into question the sincerity of the Daley Administration and the Chicago business community in establishing this Commission and working through the difficult issues that must be addressed to truly 'strengthen Chicago's pension funds.'"

The bill "will undermine the retirement security of future city of Chicago employees, who after all cannot participate in Social Security and solely rely on their city pensions for their economic security in retirement," the labor representatives on the commission said in a joint statement.

The commission included representatives from the pension funds, trustees and employee representatives, as well as representatives from the labor, business, consulting and banking communities.

Benefits are cost-effective

THE COMMISSION'S FINAL report urges Daley to address the underfunding problem as soon as possible.

Important points made by the report include:

- Retirement security in the private sector has been decimated as defined-benefit plans have been replaced by so-called defined-contribution plans. "This Commission clearly recognizes that the current defined-benefit structure is more cost-effective for the city and provides for a more secure retirement for city employees."
- The city reduced contributions to the Municipal and Laborers funds starting in 1998, and this reduction has continued every year since.
- The funds cannot invest their way out of their deficits.
- Current benefits are not unaffordable. The annual cost of newly accrued benefits is approximately equal to the total of combined employer and employee contributions.
- Among municipal defined-benefit pension plans, Chicago's employee contributions are in the middle range, as are the annuity benefits.
- Because compensation in

the form of overtime pay or bonuses are not included in the calculation of final average salary for pension purposes, Chicago's pensions are less prone than many other systems to abusive practices that artificially increase pensions based on short-term manipulation of compensation.

Time for Chicago to 'step up'

"THE CITY'S UNIONS CAN SHOW that they historically have been very responsible stewards of the pension funds," the labor members on the commission said. "The city would be hard pressed to show the same. Our members have always made their pension contributions, from every paycheck... The city has been aware of this problem for years and done nothing to increase their contributions into the four pension funds.

"Now it is time for the city of Chicago to step up, identify and enact a source of new revenues sufficient to pay both the normal cost of all city of Chicago pension benefits in all four pension funds, and also to begin to pay down the \$14 billion in unfunded liability, based on actuarial required contributions."

Cook County health plan has pluses and pitfalls

Leaders from Council 31 and Cook County AFSCME locals are taking a careful look at a strategic plan being hammered out by the Cook County Health and Hospitals System Board.

The plan envisions maintaining the current network of community clinics, rebuilding the huge and heavily used Fantus Clinic and establishing larger, regional centers with more comprehensive services. Stroger Hospital would be the main location for inpatient services, with beefed up outpatient services at Provident and Oak Forest hospitals. Provident would provide inpatient services only for urgent and emergency care. Oak For-

est would become a "Regional Outpatient Center."

The shift to outpatient, specialty, case management, diagnostic, preventive and screening services is in keeping with a national trend for provision of health care. Inpatient care is more expensive to provide, and is often an indication that a patient has not received preventive care or early intervention once a medical problem arises, although it is not clear that clos-

ing virtually all inpatient beds at Oak Forest and Provident would be prudent.

Union presidents from locals that represent system employees – Kim Doss-Patterson, Local 1276; Victoria Alexander-Harris, Local 1178; and Carmin Willis-Goodloe, Local 1111 – attended a meeting with William Foley, the system's CEO. He briefed them on the strategic plan, showed them the latest draft and solicited input from AFSCME.

"The plan could serve to bring us up to the new generation of health care in our area," said Alexander-Harris, whose local represents Oak Forest Hospital employees. But she is concerned that system officials could move too rapidly, as they have in the past. "They said they

want to build a new facility for our area. I told him that would be wasteful, when the county has plenty of space and tons of empty buildings right here.

"They closed down facilities here in the past, and now they want to restore them," she said. "Before they make big decisions, they need to think about how it will affect the patients."

Alexander-Harris is hoping that this time county leaders will heed employees' concerns. "Things we brought up in the meeting, they said they'd take them back and meet with us again for feedback."

Though it appears that implementing the plan will not cost AFSCME jobs, and might even add jobs to AFSCME bargaining units, one concern is about privatization.

"FQHCs (federally qualified health centers) will continue to expand services in many communities, with (Cook County) providing much-needed specialty service support," says one point in the plan draft. Those health centers are private entities that could gradually take over county services.

"They are talking about partnering with neighborhood hospitals," Willis-Goodloe said. "But county money going to other hospitals is a slippery slope that could ultimately take our jobs away."

One positive that she sees is better access for patients through expanded hours at county clinics.

"They are saying their plans are more patient friendly and

Continued on page 15

Change coming slowly, but coming

A long, long time ago, in January 2009, Barack Obama took the oath of office as the nation's 44th president. That day he inherited a \$1.3 trillion federal budget deficit, two wars, and an economy with sharply rising unemployment and unprecedented crises in the banking system.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S REGULATORY MACHINERY WAS IN SHAMBLES:

- As union members knew all too well when it came to getting any protection from OSHA or the National Labor Relations Board;
- As the nation soon discovered when 29 died in a poorly regulated West Virginia mine and a catastrophic oil rig explosion spilled millions and counting gallons of BP crude into the Gulf of Mexico; and
- As the extent to which deregulation contributed to the financial collapse has become ever more clear.

The sum total of these huge obstacles could easily have handcuffed the new chief executive. But it turns out they haven't.

Stimulus bill made recession shallower, shorter

THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION immediately turned its attention to the financial crisis, determined to resuscitate the economic system by pumping in federal government dollars — a solution called for by a broad consensus among economists.

Despite resistance from virtually every Republican in both chambers of Congress, the administration pushed through The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The measure provided \$91 billion in aid to education, including nearly \$16 billion to increase the amounts of federal low-interest loans for college students and \$2 billion for Head Start. There was money for Food Stamps and other food programs to help sustain the growing ranks of unemployed workers and a one-time \$250 grant to Social Security recipients.

The nation's infrastructure got an \$81 billion boost, with \$18 billion for public transportation projects and \$6 billion for wastewater and drinking water infrastructure.

There was \$15.5 billion for improving the national electric grid, \$11 billion to invest in energy efficiency and \$7 billion

for environmental cleanup.

"A simple sign of ARRA's success is that in the six-month period preceding ARRA spending, the economy was contracting at a 5.9 percent rate," said economist Josh Bivens of the Economic Policy Institute. "In the six months since significant ARRA outlays began, the economy has grown at a 1.4 percent rate. It seems clear now that it did what it was designed to do — reverse the downward spiral and push the economy back toward growth."

Obama tackles health care

NEXT CAME HEALTH-CARE reform. Calls for containing costs and covering the uninsured had been heard for 60 years. It was an Obama campaign promise that seemed doomed to defeat, especially after the Massachusetts election to replace Ted Kennedy put an opponent of reform into the U.S. Senate. But the president turned the tide, demanding that Congress act. The result — the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (see adjoining article).

Protecting workers, the environment

LESS NOTICEABLE, BUT ALSO critically important over the long haul, the Obama administration is reversing a 30-year deregulation trend.

"Obama's three Republican predecessors were all committed to weakening or even destroying the country's regulatory apparatus," journalist John Judis wrote in a *New Republic* article, listing "the Environmental Protection Agency, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and other agencies that are supposed to protect workers and consumers by regulating business practices." He could easily have added the National Labor Relations Board as a prime agency on the Reagan-Bush hit list.

"Taken as a whole," Judis asserts, "Obama's revival of



these agencies is arguably the most significant accomplishment of his first year in office."

The article explains how Obama is putting experts in the agencies' areas of responsibilities back into leadership positions. George W. Bush and his predecessors were notorious for installing political hacks, or worse, corporate insiders from the industry that was supposed to be regulated.

A check on corporate power

"BUSH APPOINTED A MINING company executive to head the Mine Safety and Health Administration and a trucking company executive to head the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration," Judis reports.

Obama has turned all that around. His appointment for the head of OSHA, David Michaels, is a professor of occupational and environmental health. He replaces Edwin Foulke Jr., "a long time foe" of the agency who had also advised companies on how to block union organization. And the president chose the first biologist ever to lead the National Park Service — a 30-year veteran of the agency.

The administration is also backing its appointees with resources, requesting a 34 percent increase in the 2010 budget for EPA, 19 percent for FDA and 10 percent for OSHA, which will fund 130 new inspectors.

"The regulatory agencies are once again able to serve

their intended purpose," Judis said.

For example, OSHA is working on a new ergonomics standard after Bush put the kibosh on one that had gone through 10 years of careful science and thorough public comment. Such a standard would give workers with repetitive stress injuries like carpal

tunnel syndrome leverage with employers to improve working conditions.

"We've got a president who is helping us rein in corporate power," Council 31 director of political affairs John Cameron said. "We have to do whatever we can to back him up in that crucial task."

Health care reform a major achievement

SOME KEY CHANGES FOR 2010-2011:

- Extends coverage for young people up to 26th birthday through parents' insurance;
- Denial of insurance for children with pre-existing conditions is prohibited;
- Creates a temporary re-insurance program for health benefits for retirees ages 55-64;
- Free preventive care under Medicare and new private plans;
- Bans lifetime limits and restrictive annual limits on coverage;
- \$250 rebate to Medicare beneficiaries who hit the donut hole in 2010.

And changes coming in 2011-2014:

- Insurance exchanges are opened and premium subsidies begin making insurance affordable for millions of Americans who otherwise couldn't afford it;
- Expands Medicaid to include any American whose income is 133 percent of federal poverty level;
- In 2011, there will be a 50 percent discount on brand name drugs for seniors who hit the donut hole;
- Donut hole will be completely closed for all prescription drugs by 2020;
- Insurance companies cannot deny coverage to anyone with preexisting conditions;
- Insurance companies can no longer charge higher rates due to health status or gender — premiums can vary only on age, geography, family size and tobacco use; and
- In 2011, increases funding for Community Health Centers to allow for nearly a doubling of the number of patients seen by the centers over the next 5 years.

ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

Rock Island Co. workers battle for fairness

THE ROCK ISLAND COUNTY Board had been generous with its own salaries, but when it came time for AFSCME members to bargain over wages, suddenly there wasn't enough money.

"They gave themselves raises in 2008 without thinking about the seven contracts they were going to have to negotiate in the next couple of years," Local 2025 President Jennifer Jackson said. "They hadn't taken into account the impact of the state financial situation. When they got to us, they were asking for a pay freeze."

The local fought back. There was a huge informational picket where police, firefighters and other unions lent support.

"The attempt to divide and conquer the unions did the opposite," Jackson said. "We all came together, saying you have to treat us all equally."

The local represents correctional officers at the county jail, among other county workers. Public-safety employees can't strike, but they can force the county to arbitration, where an impartial third party chooses between the two sides' final proposals. Eventually management agreed that the arbitration

would cover all AFSCME members who work for the county.

"The arbitrator said what we'd been saying," Jackson said. "They can't discriminate against one group. We had told them we'd take the same thing they gave themselves."

They ended up with wage increases of 3.75 percent in the first year of a three-year contract going back to 2008, and 3.5 percent for the next two years.

"Our members saw what a union really is," Jackson said. "Every single member had a part to play in resisting the intimidation from management. They realized the power we have when we're united."

The bargaining committee was led by staff representative Dino Leone, with Jackson, Don Bush, Amy Beeding, Tracey Czekalski, Jessica Lynch and Sue Adams.

Patience pays off for Bellwood group

FIVE YEARS AFTER BARGAINING began, village of Bellwood employees got a four-year contract that will provide significant back pay, with wage increases of 13.5 percent. Employees will pay 5 percent of their health-insurance premiums.

"They thought they could wait us out," said Local 1441 President Gloria Pruitt-Moore.

"Once they fired the lawyer that was representing them, things started moving. What we asked for was reasonable and we ended up getting it. Now we are waiting for the retroactive pay. It's been a waiting game – with a little bit of prayer."

The local fought off subcontracting of their work, but the village has reduced the size of the workforce through attrition and is using temporary employees to replace those employees.

"There were 20 village employees," said staff representative Ade Alagbala, who negotiated the contract with Pruitt-Moore. "Now they are down to six."

Small raises in Sangamon County

LOCAL 3079 DECIDED TO ROLL over its existing contract for three years, with raises equaling 0.5 percent plus the amount of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

Health insurance terms remain unchanged.

"I don't think we had much of a choice," said Mike Fahs, the local's president, citing the economic climate. "A half a percent is nothing. We're still out there working for the public, but it's really discouraging."

The agreement lengthens

the time limit for filing a grievance, extends the clothing allowance to cover more items and allows for reimbursement if workers take classes for a pesticide-sprayer license.

Staff representative Chuck Stout led the bargaining committee with Fahs, Gary Butchek, Sam Johnson, Will Huddleston, Jim Sausaman and Bob Salmon.

Wages up for East Moline school support workers

WAGES GO UP 3 PERCENT IN THE first year of a four-year contract and 2 percent in each succeeding year for transportation and maintenance workers in the East Moline schools.

Custodians won the right to take some of their vacation time during the school year. The local won a breakthrough on its long-sought goal of benefits for part-time bus drivers with a personal business day.

"It opened the door," said staff representative Tony McCubbin, who led the union bargaining team.

"It was a long, drawn-out affair," Local 2040 President Dave Zirzow said. "The schools are having a really hard time with the economy the way it is. No funds coming from the state has a lot to do with it. But finally they realized what we wanted was a fair contract, and they gave it to us. We weren't over-asking."

McCubbin led the union's two negotiating committees, with Zirzow on both. Margo Guinn, Leroy McMahan and Carlene Lee were on the transportation committee; Bob Schultz, Jaime Cantu, Thomas Bender and Francis Cantu were on the maintenance and custodians committee.

Pinch on nonprofits squeezes Little City and its workers

WITHOUT A WAGE INCREASE since 2007, workers are struggling to keep up at Little City Foundation, a state-funded agency that provides developmental disability services.

But so is the agency.

"The state budget is so awful and the cuts in social services are devastating," said staff representative Flo Estes, who led the bargaining committee. "We knew there would be no wage increase, but our members are hurting, so we held out for a decent bonus. We were not willing to take nothing and we let it be known."

Local members took their case directly to the agency board of directors, with written statements about how difficult it is to live on the wages they get.

As one single mother of two teenagers who makes \$10 per hour put it: "I work constant overtime to be able to pay for my monthly expenses.

My children are literally one step away from being homeless because I am always late on my rent...I'm so tired and totally worn out from all the excessive overtime. My children do not get a chance to spend any quality time with me or engage in any family activities. My son is starting to become more rebellious and is not doing what I ask of him because he feels I don't care and I'm not there for him or his sister."

The contract provides for bonuses of from \$300 to \$700, based on longevity.

"We wanted a base-pay increase, but at least we got the bonus," Local 4008 President Darlene Banks said. "We also got good language on pulling people."

When there are not enough workers to staff a group home on a given shift, someone is "pulled" from their regular worksite to work with residents they don't know well.

"Now instead of pulling the same people all the time, they have to rotate it," she explained. "That makes it more fair."

The local also won the right to view surveillance-camera footage in disciplinary disputes.

Banks, Rosalind Wakefield, Julius Kirigua and Alice Davis served on the bargaining committee.

New Hope workers win wage increase

DESPITE THE DIRE CONDITION OF non-profits that depend on state funding, workers at New Hope Center, which provides developmental disability services, won a 2-percent wage increase for the first year of a four-year contract. Wages for the remaining years will be negotiated later.

"We are fighting so hard," Local 1232 President Denise Slaughter said. "But the state has nothing and we're at the bottom of the list. The services we provide are for special individuals and they deserve a decent lifestyle. But the state of Illinois doesn't value them, and they have no say. I hope whoever is the governor next year takes heed."

The negotiating team was led by staff representative Lora Harris, with Slaughter, Randy Daniels, Verissa Weeks, Virginia Radcliffe, Alice Smith, Jackie Morrow, Gladys Smith and Edna Williams.

Contract extended in Will County

LOCAL 1028 AGREED TO ROLL the existing contract over for one year, with no across-the-board wage increase. Everyone covered by the contract will get a 2.5 percent step increase, including those at the top of the step plan.

Continued on the facing page

CHECK OUT COUNCIL 31'S NEWLY DESIGNED WEB SITE FOR ALL THE LATEST NEWS ON YOUR UNION.

www.afscme31.org

The screenshot shows the AFSCME Council 31 website. At the top, it says "Council 31 AFSCME We Make Illinois Happen". There is a search bar and a navigation menu with links for News, Action Center, Organize, Political Action, Retirees, Personal Support Program, and About. The main content area features a large photo of a crowd at a rally with the headline "Rally Rocks Capitol". Below the photo, it says "More than 3,000 determined citizens—including hundreds of AFSCME members—packed the state Capitol rotunda on Wednesday to demand swift legislative action to address the state's budget woes." To the right of the photo is a "Sign Up for Email Updates" form and a "JOIN AFSCME" button. At the bottom, there are several news snippets, including "Brady Pushes Bill to Eliminate the State Pension System" and "House Passes Bill to Put Brakes on Thomson Sale".

Continued from facing page

Employees who had been laid off from the nursing home were recalled.

"The county was pretty cooperative," said Sherry Williams, the local union president. "They offered the rollover and we thought it was the best thing to do. The members agreed. We decided to keep what we have and not lose anything. But in the next contract we expect them to come up with something."

The bargaining committee was led by staff representative Joe Pluger, with Williams, Dave Delrose, Becky Gilliam, Nancy Peet, Rick Breen, John Cairns, Julius Gambino, Tanya Mingo, Brenda Taylor and Joy Yasko.

Raises 'fair' in Knox County

COURTHOUSE EMPLOYEES IN Knox County ratified a contract that raises wages 13 percent over four years.

"Bargaining was, as usual, very difficult," Local 3217 Vice President Judy Johnson said. "The wages were fair. Especially in today's economy."

But wages weren't the main bone of contention, she said.

The county wanted the right to random drug testing.

"I don't believe in random testing," Johnson said. "It's a violation of privacy. Management already has the right to test if they think something is wrong."

The local finally agreed to the same policy that applies to the sheriff's department.

The negotiating committee was led by staff representative Randy Lynch, with Johnson, Lisa England, Carol Hallam and Linda Stroops.

Gains at Springfield Housing Authority

SOLIDARITY DEMONSTRATIONS, including button-wearing and green T-shirt days, helped solidify Local 3982 in bargaining that yielded a 3.8 percent wage increase for the first year of a three-year contract. Bargaining for the second year begins in October.

Improvements were made on bereavement leave, temporary assignment pay and compensatory time.

"We all know each other here," said Unita Boyd, the local's president. "And we know the budget. There was a lot of give and take and they met us in the middle."

The bargaining committee was led by staff representative Nick Christen, with Boyd, Virginia Pursley and Gary Frey.

SHORT REPORTS

Lottery privatization: AFSCME members to remain state employees

WHEN THE LEGISLATURE AUTHORIZED the governor to privatize management of the state lottery last year, Council 31 lobbyists were able to insert language into the bill to protect lottery employees' rights.

Now that the Quinn administration is pushing ahead with the privatization, these provisions will be essential to protect the jobs of AFSCME members in the Department of Revenue who work for the lottery.

- The private manager shall utilize the services of current department employees to assist in the administration and operation of the lottery;
- The department shall be the employer of all such bargaining unit employees;
- Such employees shall be state employees and shall operate under the same employment policies, rules, regulations, and procedures, as other employees of the department.
- Neither historical representation rights under the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act, nor existing collective bargaining agreements, shall be disturbed by the management agreement with the private manager for the management of the lottery.

"We do not believe the state will benefit from privatization of the lottery," Council 31 legislative director Joanna Webb-Gauvin said. "Our first priority was to protect our members' jobs, and we were able to do that."

Former Howe residents encountering problems

ONLY A HANDFUL OF RESIDENTS were left at Howe Developmental Center when On the Move went to press.

The transition has not delivered the promised better lives for former residents, if the reports coming into the Howe Closure Committee are any indication.

"Officially, 12 residents have died since they transitioned out," Council 31 public policy director Anne Irving said. "We are monitoring outcomes for Howe's former residents as closely as we can. AFSCME members at Howe want to do all they can to protect their residents, and our union must do all we can to

Plenty of time to take furlough days

AS OF THE MIDDLE OF MAY 11,376 VOLUNTARY FURLOUGH days had been requested by state employees working under AFSCME's state master contract.

Members who take advantage of this program can earn one paid day off for every two furlough days taken.

State employees who take voluntary unpaid furlough days anytime until June 30, 2011 earn paid days off in conjunction with major holidays.

Employees can submit requests for unpaid furlough days on a form provided by their agency. Requests will be approved on a first-come, first served basis (if submitted on the same day, seniority shall prevail).

The first bonus day is Nov. 24, 2010; the second, Dec. 23, 2010; the third, Dec. 30, 2010; the fourth, July 5, 2011; and the final is a personal day, to be taken after Jan. 1, 2012.

The furlough days required to earn an incentive day must be taken before that day. More than 10 furlough days can be taken, but no additional incentive days are earned.

document the danger of irresponsibly closing state-operated centers."

She said that a breakdown of "significant incidents" that had an impact on residents who have been forced to move out of Howe included police calls, emergency room or hospital visits, psychiatric hospitalizations, deaths, elopements and reported behavioral problems.

"As most residents moved out only in the last couple of months, we expect to see more incidents reported next month," Irving said.

Equip for Equality, a group claiming to be an advocate for disabled individuals that has led the fight to close state centers, recently issued a report that attempted to minimize the trauma many Howe residents have experienced in community placements.

"These extremists aren't going away," Irving said. "Howe's fight is every state center's fight. And every state center must be getting ready to do battle. The combination that hit Howe – short staffing and poor management leadership – is in place at many of our centers."

She said the Department of Human Services has indicated that the U.S. Department of Justice may expand its investigation to all nine of the state developmental centers. "AFSCME locals must identify

every ally they can – in the legislature, in the community, in the family members – so we are ready for the fight."

Resurrection Health Care gets OK to sell two hospitals

A STATE BOARD HAS GIVEN THE green light to Vanguard Health System's purchase of West Suburban Medical Center and Westlake Hospital – two facilities now owned by Resurrection Health Care. But pressure from AFSCME helped to strengthen the conditions on the sale in order to better protect employees' jobs and preserve services to the community.

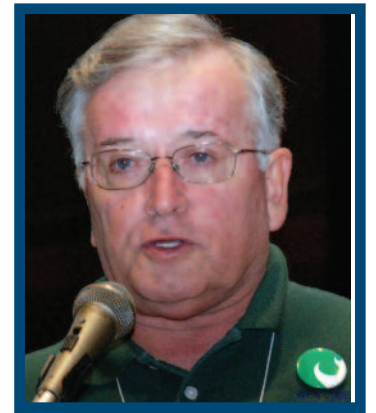
Among the requirements the Health Facilities and Services Review Board imposed on Vanguard as a condition of the sale:

- Commit to keeping both hospitals open for a minimum of three years rather than two as originally proposed (AFSCME had advocated for a 10-year commitment);
- Maintain all current services at both hospitals for a minimum of three years;
- Invest \$15 million in the hospitals, in contrast to the initial application which made no commitment to invest; and
- Expand the community advisory committees that would meet regularly with hospital management.

These are binding conditions with penalties set if Vanguard fails to follow through.

Community residents and employees were out in force for the board meeting.

"They recognized that it is only because patients and employees demanded a long term commitment to their hospitals that Vanguard was forced to make these concessions," Council 31 lead organizer Doug Woodson said. "They vowed to continue fighting for a long-term future for both hospitals. Our union will work with them to see that Vanguard follows through on the conditions. And we will continue to press Vanguard to provide job opportunities for all current employees and to maintain all current services well beyond its current three-year commitment."

**AFSCME activist recognized by state AFL-CIO**

LOCAL 2600 MEMBER, STEWARD, volunteer member organizer, co-chair of the local's Community Action Committee, PEOPLE volunteer, grassroots lobbyist, Jim Dixon has been named winner of the 2010 Robert G. Gibson Community Services Award by the Illinois Federation of Labor.

The Gibson award recognizes a union member in the state who has shown outstanding leadership in his or her community.

Nominated by Springfield and Central Illinois Trades and Labor Council, Dixon got the award at a June 23 banquet in Normal.

Dixon, a relentless supporter of the Heartland Human Services strikers

who spent vacation time in Effingham during the strike, has worked for his local as food drive coordinator and on the golf tournament for veterans and school supplies for needy kids projects. Having lost his son in a 1991 car accident, he was a founding member of the Bereaved Parents of USA support group in 1995.

In his home village of Jerome he has held many volunteer positions, including chair of the park committee, president of the zoning board, chair of the ethics committee and "village gardener" at the library and park.

He has served as treasurer and on the executive board for his local and been the health and safety chair.

RETIREE NOTES



Retirees gathered in Springfield to lobby against insurance premium increases.

Chapter wins in campaign to stop health insurance hikes

IN THE FACE OF THIS SPRING'S vigorous grassroots lobbying campaign by Chapter 31, the Quinn administration backed off plans to unilaterally impose drastically higher health-insurance premiums on state and university retirees. The administration acknowledged that the union contract created a legal barrier to making the changes — and that any changes to retiree contributions would have to be negotiated with AFSCME.

No sooner had the governor's office made this announcement than a group of Democratic legislators held a press conference to advance their own package of budget amendments — which included a significant increase in retiree premiums. The amendment was spearheaded by state Rep. Karen May, who told reporters that retirees "must feel the pain."

Apparently few of her colleagues agreed. After an overnight call-in blitz by retirees, members of the House Executive Committee overwhelmingly rejected May's amendment, with only two "yes" votes—Republicans Ed Sullivan of Mundelein and Michael Tryon of Crystal Lake.

Then another decisive blow was struck in favor of protecting the economic security of retirees later the same day. AFSCME had been lobbying for weeks against passage of a Quinn-backed bill known as the Emergency Budget Act, which gave the governor

extraordinary authority to make changes in a variety of laws and regulations.

The administration had initially said that it would use that power to increase retiree health-care costs. So even though Quinn had backed away from that statement, Rep. Raymond Poe, R-Springfield, made sure that, during the floor debate on the bill, language was inserted in the official "legislative history" clearly stating that nothing in its provisions could be construed as allowing the governor to unilaterally increase retiree health-care costs.

"In Springfield, no fight is ever really over," Council 31 retiree coordinator Maria Britton said. "But this is probably as close as it gets. We can say with near absolute certainty that Quinn's plan to drastically increase health-care costs for state and university retirees is off the table — for now — thanks to the unified and vigorous fight waged by our chapter members all across Illinois, backed up by the on-site lobbying in Springfield of the Council 31 legislative team. However, given the state's gargantuan budget gap and the steady drumbeat from the business community demanding huge premium increases, we can expect to face a repeat of this battle in future legislative sessions."

Arbitration win continues to benefit retirees

A NEW REPORT PROVIDED TO SERS from third-party actuaries illustrates the continuing value of a 2008 AFSCME arbitration victory to state retirees

with less than 20 years of service who retired on or after Jan. 1, 1998.

"The report illustrates that whatever state retirees are going to be paying effective July 1 for health insurance, they would be paying 17.3 percent more for the Quality Care Health Plan and 15.4 percent more under an HMO were it not for the AFSCME victory," according to Council 31 employee benefits director Hank Scheff.

The grievance arose when Council 31 discovered that the state was overcharging those retirees who pay a portion of their health-insurance premiums because they retired with fewer than 20 years' service. The state had been receiving modest "rebates" from name-brand pharmaceutical manufacturers for many years. In 2006, the state began to receive, in addition to these rebates, very significant "subsidies" from Medicare, subsidies that the state earns by continuing to provide Medicare-eligible retirees with prescription drug coverage as good as or better than the Medicare prescription drug program.

"When we reviewed the state's premium calculations, the union discovered that the state was not adding these rebates and subsidies into their calculation of retiree health-insurance rates," Scheff said. "The state was collecting these rebates and subsidies and refusing to pass the savings along to retirees."

AFSCME argued that the contract required the state to use "actual costs" in calculating the insurance premiums,

and that the rebates and subsidies were in effect discounts. The state was therefore required to apply them in calculating the premium rates. The independent arbitrator agreed and ruled that the state had to give retirees credit for these subsidies and rebates by reducing premiums, starting July 1, 2008, and continuing into the future.

Closing donut hole among pluses from health-care reform

AMONG EARLY IMPACTS OF THE new health-care legislation, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, will be help for retirees who hit the Medicare Part D coverage gap also known as the donut hole. Many IMRF retirees fall into the donut hole, as they usually receive no health-care coverage from their employers when they retire and rely fully on Medicare.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, the 80,000 seniors who first hit the donut hole were sent a \$250 check on June 10. Checks will go out monthly as more seniors fall into the gap, with an estimated 4 million seniors eventually receiving the rebate this year.

The gap occurs when participants use up their initial coverage under Part D. Once they go over the annual limit, Medicare beneficiaries are responsible for the entire cost of prescriptions until they reach the catastrophic coverage threshold.

Seniors now enrolled in a Part D plan pay 25 percent of their prescription costs up to a total of \$2,830. Then they pay full costs until their out-of-pocket spending reaches \$4,550. After that point, catastrophic coverage kicks in and enrollees pay 5 percent of drug costs.

In 2011 the rebate will be replaced by a 50-percent discount on drugs for those who fall into the hole and will gradually phase up to a 75-percent discount in 2020, essentially eliminating the coverage gap.

Longtime union activist, Don Fitch, passes



DON FITCH, PRESIDENT OF JOLIET Sub-chapter 73, executive board member of Chapter 31 and longtime member of both AFSCME and Chapter 31 passed away May 3.

Fitch retired as a lieutenant from Stateville Correctional Center after 30 year's service. Local 1866 President Ralph Portwood said Fitch was an essential asset in Will County to his retirees, the union and the community.

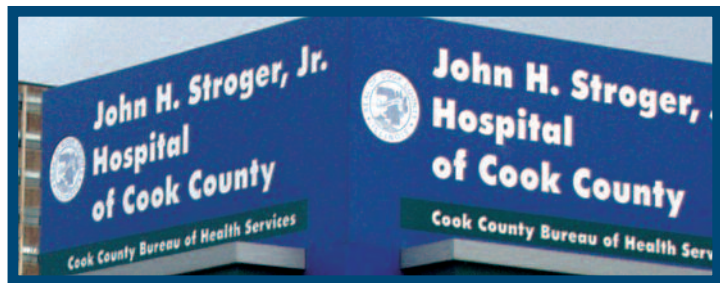
"He was a breath of fresh air, who continued helping our local long after his retirement," Portwood said. "I cannot communicate how much his presence will be missed."

Fitch helped organize Sub-chapter 73 and was the first and only president until his death. He also served for seven years on the Chapter 31 executive board.

"Don was the force that kept the sub-chapter motivated and active over the years," chapter board member Shirley Byrd said. "He will be truly missed by those who had the opportunity to know him up close and personal."

"Don was usually involved in any big action done by the chapter, but one specific incident comes to mind that really describes the loyalty and focus that he brought with him into the union," said Joanna Webb-Gauvin, former Chapter 31 Retiree Director. "In 2005, Don was very active in the Americans United to Protect Social Security, an organization centered on preventing President Bush's goal of privatizing Social Security. On the morning of an event Don organized to convince U.S. Rep. Jerry Weller to stand with the seniors in opposing privatization, I received a call asking what AFSCME Retirees were doing in Joliet because the FBI was alerted to possible trouble from the group. Don was so delighted that a few retired people could raise such alarm bells. He said that the political will of retirees should always be given such notice. That was just like Don."

Cook County Health Plan



Continued from page 10

will provide better coverage in medically deprived areas. We'll have to keep our guard up and see if they are actually interested in what we have to say."

Union played key role in depoliticizing Cook County system

A drumbeat was building in 2008 that Cook County could no longer afford its highly regarded system of free and low-cost health care for the poor and uninsured.

The Cook County Bureau of Health Services was bleeding money, failing to collect when it could have from insurers and even from Medicaid and Medicare. Major layoffs were imminent.

In response, AFSCME helped organize the Emergency Network to Save Cook County Health Services. The network pushed for an independent board to temporarily take over running the bureau and begin rooting out the neglect, political cronyism, corruption and mismanagement that had long plagued the operations.

They were successful. The newly created board was charged with hiring an executive to run operations and developing a strategic plan. That plan is nearing its final form, with input from AFSCME, the public and other unions.

And on June 1 of this year, the County Board made permanent the board's role in running the system.

"There is a danger that the independent board will be unresponsive to the needs of the community and of its workers if it isn't closely monitored," said John Cameron, AFSCME's representative to the Emergency Network. "That's why the union believes giving it permanent status was premature. There are people on that board who are hostile to unions and have a pro-privatization agenda. They need to be reined in and focused on improving services to the community and respecting the right of their employees."

Scholarship winners aim for public-service careers

The Larry Marquardt Scholarship selection committee has named the daughter of an office associate at Pinckneyville Correctional Center and the son of an executive secretary at Ludeman Developmental Center as this year's award winners.

KRISTA PIOTROWSKI, DAUGHTER OF DONNA PIOTROWSKI FROM TAMAROA, AND DEVIN ANDERSON, son of Deborah Anderson from Country Club Hills, will each get \$1,000 from Council 31.

The award, established in memory of the council's first executive director, demonstrates the union's commitment to education.

Krista Piotrowski is studying elementary education at Southern Illinois University, after two-and-a-half years at Rend Lake College.

Devin Anderson is pursuing a career in physical therapy at South Suburban College.

Improving workers' lives

"WITHOUT THE ORGANIZATION of the labor movement, children would still be working in factories, decent salaries would

still be deprived to minorities and working conditions would still be in jeopardy," Anderson said in the essay he wrote for the scholarship. "The labor movement has shown us that by working together we can improve workers' way of life. Women and minorities have also enjoyed the privileges that were once deprived of them."

In an insight that many working folks could benefit from, the young Anderson said, "There has been a lot of negativism about the labor movement. This negativity is the result of those who are trying to prevent it from achieving its goals. ... Without this movement there would be more people losing their jobs unfairly, and there would be more employers cutting wages unfairly."

Sticking up for yourself

IN HER ESSAY KRISTA PIOTROWSKI talked about the good news and bad news of small town life in Southern Illinois:

"It has been a very good place to grow up and go to school. There is, however, a shortage of good paying jobs in this area. In fact, this area has been economically depressed

for quite some time. Factories have been closing down in all the surrounding cities; and that is where labor unions such as AFSCME help the local community. ...

"With the state of the economy in America today, hard-working people need to be protected by unions against the corporate CEOs, who sometimes are more worried about their pocketbooks instead of the welfare of their employees.

"Without labor unions workers ... have no way to stick up for themselves. ...

"Unions are more important than ever, because the common working man or woman needs someone to stand up for them in the large world of corporate politics."

The scholarship winners were selected by a committee of distinguished retired AFSCME leaders: Steve Culen, former Council 31 executive director; Tish Taylor, former AFSCME International area director for Illinois; and Rose Daylie, former associate director of Council 31.



U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk: failing grade

Continued from page 5

of wage discrimination. The bill would strengthen the right of women to be paid the same as men for the same work.

The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 was the first bill signed by President Barack Obama after he took office. It restored long-standing pay discrimination protection that the Supreme Court had eliminated in a 2007 decision. Kirk voted NO on that measure, too.

Jobs and aid to cash-strapped state governments

AFTER SIX YEARS OF GEORGE W. Bush's harmful cuts to a wide range of programs run by state and local governments, Kirk voted NO in 2007 on restoring some of this funding.

On the huge federal economic recovery bill passed only weeks after Barack Obama took office, Kirk voted NO. The law

provided vital state and local fiscal relief – a potential \$8 billion for Illinois – extended unemployment assistance to the long-term unemployed and key funding for job preservation and creation.

On the Jobs for Main Street Act of 2010, which focuses on stabilizing jobs through infrastructure investment, preserving and creating public service jobs and continuing emergency funding for families hurt by the economy, Kirk voted NO.

Health care reform

KIRK VOTED NO ON THE Affordable Health Care for America Act, which restricts the ability of insurance companies to deny coverage; extends coverage for young adults up to the age of 26 under their parents' policies; closes the doughnut hole for seniors' prescription drugs;

and makes insurance affordable for millions of previously uninsured.

Privatization

KIRK VOTED YES WHEN THE House passed Bush's move to privatize Medicare with the so-called "Medicare Advantage" law, which gave away billions in overpayments to private insurance companies that provide an alternative to traditional Medicare benefits.

And he voted NO to ban the federal government from contracting out to private (non-IRS) tax collection agencies.

Tax cuts for the rich

AS IF BUSH HADN'T TRANSFERRED enough income from the public coffers to the very rich, he backed a 2006 measure that made another \$70

billion in tax cuts. It was the fifth tax cut that went mainly to the rich (those making more than \$250,000 a year) enacted during Bush's two terms. Kirk voted YES. And when a measure came up to make the Bush tax cuts permanent, Kirk voted YES.

Kirk's opponent, Alexi Giannoulias, doesn't have a voting record, having served in public office only as Illinois' treasurer.

"Giannoulias will get a chance to respond to our candidate questionnaire and meet with our PEOPLE Committee," Cameron said. "Then we'll make a choice. The decision will be up to the PEOPLE conference delegates – local union presidents and PEOPLE committee chairs. If we do make an endorsement, we'll go all out to get our candidate elected."

Yolanda Sims

Steve Nordyke



Next Up

AFL-CIO turns to new generation for leadership



The labor movement's ranks of seasoned veterans are thinning with the passage of time, and a new generation of union leaders must soon be ready to step into those roles.

Workers in their 20s and 30s need a union just as much as, if not more than, their parents did. But years of anti-union propaganda and relentless corporate attacks on unions have created a generation gap in the ranks of union activists.

"I firmly believe that there is no better way to make America's economy work for us individually and for all people who work for a living than with a union," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler said at the union federation's "Next Up" young workers summit. "I believe there is no better way to build a powerful voice for your values and for your generation than through unions. I know it. You know it. But there are a lot of young people out there who don't

know it...What are you going to do to change it?"

The young workers called for:

- Increasing mentoring programs to help young union members grow into leadership roles;
- Establishing a national youth mobilization effort;
- Organizing a Next Up constituency group;
- Holding a national youth summit each year;
- Opening up seats for the Next Up generation on national, state federation and local central body boards;
- Creating an internship website with information on national, state and local opportunities; and
- Creating blogs that highlight best practices for involving young workers.

More than 400 young union activists from nearly every affiliated union attended the June 10-13 conference in Washington, including two from AFSCME in Illinois – Local 2481 President Yolanda Sims and Local 2600 Vice President Steve Nordyke.

"It excited me a lot," Sims said. "It was good to see all the trade unions together and hear from the younger people in other unions."

She said there aren't a lot of young people in Springfield's AFL-CIO local central body. At the conference, though, "We passed a resolution that will give us a chance to push for reaching out to young members."

But how to reach out is the question.

"Facebook and the social networks are great," Sims said, "but a combination of old and new will get

it. When you talk about building a union, face-to-face still works best."

The three days in Washington combined learning and teaching, with educational workshops and many opportunities for those at the conference to ask questions as well as tell AFL-CIO's top leaders what they thought.

The federation's national President Rich Trumka spoke to the group. He called workers at the summit "the faces of change, the future of American labor."

He outlined the corporate and political assault of the past three decades that has stripped workers of the freedom to join unions, instilled fear, shipped jobs overseas and more recently shattered the economy.

"I believe we can and will fix a lot of this," he said, "and I want you to believe that and fight for that with me."

Nordyke said it was great to have access to these national leaders. "They are trying to empower the youth movement." But "There's no silver bullet to getting young members involved. You can wrap it with whatever you want – use social media like Facebook and Twitter, or texting – but one-on-one with a good message is still the best way to involve them."

Youth need a voice in the labor movement, Nordyke said. "Without a youth presence, the labor movement will peter out and you'll lose. We're trying to grow through the youth movement or any other way, so the more tools you have in your toolbox, the better."