



Legislative Report

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Governor presents rocky road for budget talks

GOVERNOR BRUCE RAUNER presented two options to the Illinois General Assembly when he laid out his proposed Fiscal Year 2017 budget. Neither of them are very attractive to Democrats, who control both chambers of the legislature.

First, the Governor insisted, enact some of his proposed economic reforms to shore up the Illinois economy, and he would work with lawmakers to enact a combination of tax increases, budget cuts and other reforms to balance the budget.

Without those economic reforms, however, he is unwilling to impose tax increases on the state's citizens and instead would ask for the authority to do a multi-billion dollar series of budget cuts, himself.

Majority Democrats have resisted discussion of his economic reforms for the past year, which include trimming workers' compensation costs, lawsuit reforms, and restrictions on collective bargaining for public employees. And they are not likely to give the state's chief executive the power to unilaterally slash billions of dollars in state spending with no input.

So, at least for time being, we are likely to see more of the same gridlock that has settled in over the state Capitol for the last year. The Governor and the legislature have not agreed on a budget plan for this year, let alone the new year that begins July 1.

The Governor did single out one area of the budget that he would not cut, nor compromise on: education funding. He asked the General Assembly to pass appro-

priation bills that will soon be introduced by Republican leaders in both houses that would boost funding for K-12 spending. And he indicated he would sign those bills immediately.

He also asked for quick approval of a pension reform bill put forth by Senate President John Cullerton that could save substantial money for state coffers. But the Senate leader has indicated he would hold off on moving the reform plan until more progress on an overall budget is achieved.

Anti-township bills introduced

As expected, we will be facing an onslaught of legislative proposals aimed at townships. Bills continue to be introduced, but so far, here are those we have already focused on:

House Bill 4967 (*McSweeney, R-Barrington Hills*); **Senate Bill 2464** (*Connelly, R-Lisle*) – allows for referendum to be put on the ballot by petition to abolish any unit of local government.

House Bill 4968 (*Demmer, R-Dixon*); **Senate Bill 2462** (*Duffy, R-Lake Barrington*); **Senate Bill 2412** (*Althoff, R-Crystal Lake*) – provides that all townships within a coterminous municipality may be consolidated by referendum.

House Bill 4975 (*Yingling, D-Round Lake*) – makes it easier to abolish all townships within a county by citizens petition or county board vote.

House Bill 4980 (*Franks, D-Woodstock*); **Senate Bill 2470** (*Duffy*); **Senate Bill 2288** (*Althoff*) – removes current statutory provisions that serve as disincentives to consolidating townships within a county.

Senate Bill 2287 (*Althoff*) – allows for citizen petition for a binding referendum to abolish a single township and further enumerates transfer of responsibilities to the county.



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