



# Legislative Report

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## *It's fall ... and still no State budget*

IT HAS BEEN TWO MONTHS since our last issue, and there is very little to report from the Capitol since then. Legislators have met on an almost weekly basis, but as we work through the month of July, the State Fair, and then Labor Day, still no progress on wrapping things up from the spring session of the 2015 Illinois General Assembly.

**Gov. Bruce Rauner** has narrowed the list of items of his "turnaround agenda" (which he insists must be addressed before serious talk on the budget can commence), but remains steadfast that some of it be considered first. Democrats have tinkered with some of those items, but have refused to go along with most of them. Hence, a lot of finger-pointing and little progress. Legislators have agreed on a couple of budgetary proposals, including one that expends federal money that flows through Springfield. Release of other spending items, including state payrolls, have been ruled a requirement by the courts, so much of the pressure of not having a budget has been somewhat relieved. It has been estimated that as much as 80 percent of the total state spending could be expended without budget authorization. And those spending levels, cast over a 12-month period, would far exceed the available revenues necessary to pay for them.

One of the items where spending has NOT been released is **Motor Fuel Tax Fund** distributions to local governments, including townships. Unless the General Assembly and the Governor intervene by way of new legislation, those dollars will not start flowing until a final budget is approved. We remain hopeful that the full distribution will begin once that passage occurs.

On the township front, **Senate Bill 1704 (Sullivan, D-Rushville; Hammond, R-Macomb)** was signed into law. This TOI-supported measure clarifies that the 90-day period for temporarily lowering weight limits on township roads does not have to run consecutively. Our thanks to Sen. John Sullivan and Rep. Norine Hammond, along with House co-sponsor **Dan Beiser (D-Alton)**, for their sponsorship of this bill. Another measure, **House Bill 372**

**(Hoffman, D-Belleville; Cunningham, D-Chicago)** passed during some idle time in August and was sent to the Governor. It requires that a township have a study conducted to survey costs of sewer system hook-ups in neighboring areas before it can impose new or increase existing fees. This bill is considerably improved compared to earlier versions that imposed strict fee limits on such systems. However, TOI opposed the final version simply on the basis of the potential cost of such a study. Nonetheless, our thanks to **Sen. James Clayborne, D-Belleville** and **Rep. Jay Hoffman** for their efforts in trying to reach a workable compromise.

There has also been efforts to pass some form of a property tax freeze. Most of the initiatives borrow the structure of the existing PTELL (tax cap) law, but impose a zero percent growth cap as opposed to the current CPI limit. However, most also apply that zero percent growth to ALL taxing bodies, even if they are currently not under tax caps. The most current version, **Senate Bill 318 (Cullerton, D-Chicago; Currie, D-Chicago)**, passed the Senate with all Democrat votes but has been bogged down by side issues, including inclusion of a sunset of the school aid formula and changes to payments to Chicago's retired teachers' pension funds, as well as exclusion of Gov. Rauner's desired local government collective bargaining reforms.

The following is our updated list of legislation from the spring session:

**HB 174 (McSweeney, R-Barrington Hills)** allows for abolition of non-home rule units of government by referendum. Held in House Executive Committee. TOI opposes.

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**HB 177 (McSweeney)** freezes property tax extensions for three years. Held in House Revenue Committee. TOI opposes.

**HB 178 (McSweeney)** freezes township property tax assessments for one year. Passed the House; held in Senate Executive Committee. TOI opposes.

**HB 261 (Sosnowski, R-Rockford); HB 3090 (Demmer, R-Dixon)** eases requirements for publishing various types of information by local governments in newspapers. Held in House Counties and Townships Committee. TOI supports both.

**HB 435 (Sullivan, R-Mundelein)** requires units of local government of 5,000 or more population to maintain an Internet website. House Counties and Townships Committee. TOI opposes; **HB 1323 (Yingling, D-Round Lake)** removes stipulation that a local government has a full-time staff operating a website before it is required to post meeting notices and minutes. House Counties and Townships Committee. TOI opposes. **HB 2717 (Ives, R-Wheaton)** requires a unit of local government with a budget of at least \$1 million to have a website and to post a long laundry list of public documents. TOI opposes; passed the House; held by Senate Executive Committee. **SB 26 (Morrison, D-Deerfield; Sente, D-Vernon Hills)** requires all public bodies that have a website to post certain records. TOI opposes; passed Senate; held by sponsor in House Judiciary Committee.

**HB 695 (Franks D-Woodstock)** freeze property tax extensions PERMANENTLY for ALL local governments located in tax-capped counties. House passage stage; TOI opposes.

**HB 1434 (Franks, D-Woodstock)** prohibits a public official from holding more than one public office. Held in House Judiciary Committee subcommittee. TOI opposes.

**HB 1524 (Steward, R-Freeport); HB 2580 (Costello, D-Belleville; Sullivan, D-Rushville)** place restrictions on township road commissioners from posting weight limits on township roads. HB 1524 held in House Transportation Committee. HB 2580 amended to address township concerns. Passed both Houses; signed by the Governor. PA 99-0237.

**HB 3225 (Mautino, D-Spring Valley)** removes requirement that local governments, including townships, file petitions of exemption every year for property owned with the county assessor. Held in House Revenue Committee. TOI supports.

**HB 3693 (Hoffman, D-Belleville; Clayborne, D-Belleville)** allows for dissolution of Belleville Township only if the Township Board and Belleville city council both agree. Passed both Houses; sent to the Governor. TOI opposed.

**SB 30 (Morrison, D-Deerfield)** eliminates stipend for township assessors who meet state-set performance levels. Passed Senate Local Government Committee; held by sponsor on Senate floor. TOI opposes.

**SB 40 (Althoff, R-Crystal Lake)** allows for abolition of townships that are coterminous with cities and have the same executive or trustees as the city by referendum. Senate Local Government Committee; held in subcommittee. TOI opposes.

**SB 656 (Murphy, R-Palatine)** places a two-year freeze on individual property tax bills. Held in Senate Revenue Committee; subcommittee. TOI opposes.

**SB 857, 858, 859 (McConnaughay, R-St. Charles)** all mandate any unit of local government located in a county of 100,000 or more population maintain a website; the bills differ with each delineating particular items that must be posted on said website. Held in Senate Executive Committee. TOI opposes.

**SB 1390 (McConnaughay)** increases from 55 to 65 feet the permissible length of a truck on non-state highways. Held in Senate Executive Committee. TOI opposes.

**SB 1430, Amendment #1 (Bush)** allows for abolition of township assessors by county-wide referendum. Defeated by Senate Local Government Committee. TOI opposes.

**SB 1704 (Sullivan, D-Rushville; Hammond, R-Macomb and Beiser, D-Alton)** clarifies that the 90-day posting law for township roads does not have to be executed consecutively. TOI supports. Passed both Houses; signed by the Governor. PA 99-0168.

**SB 1815 and HB 264 (McCarter, R-Lebanon); HB 3309 (Kay, R-Edwardsville)** place restrictions on the permissible amount of charges for local sewer hook-up. SB 1815 and HB 264 held in Senate Executive Committee; HB 3309 tabled by the sponsor. TOI opposes both. **HB 372 (Hoffman, D-Belleville; Cunningham, D-Chicago)** requires a study before a township can impose or raise sewer hook-up fees. TOI opposed; passed both Houses.

