



the

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Governor Outlines His Plan for State Budget

On March 10, Governor Pat Quinn outlined his plan to get Illinois out of what he called a financial “crisis of epic proportions.” His plan to balance the budget primarily relies on spending cuts, increased and postponed debt, a tax credit for job creation, and a tax surcharge for education. While the governor’s staff had announced many of those ideas earlier, the tax surcharge was new and in this election year, many lawmakers feel it has little chance of approval. Without it, the governor said the state will have a \$13 billion deficit in the next fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Quinn was originally scheduled to give his budget address in February, but he delayed it for a month to have more time to prepare. During that time the state established a Web site for citizens to give their ideas about ways to fix the state’s multi-billion dollar deficit. Quinn said some of those ideas ended up in his plan.

The governor began his address by describing the state’s financial picture, which he called a “fiscal disaster” caused by large drops in revenues and “years” of overspending. In addition, \$1 billion in federal stimulus monies which helped fund education this current fiscal year, won’t be available for the next fiscal year.

To combat these problems, the governor suggested: cutting state spending by \$2.2 billion, borrowing almost \$5 billion, increasing federal monies to Illinois, creating new jobs, postponing \$6.3 billion in debt payments, and increasing state revenues, mostly by enacting a one percent income tax surcharge for

education funding, which would bring the state income tax rate to 4%.

That income tax hike would let the state “restore education funding to current levels” and help the state “catch up” with large payments it owes public schools, community colleges, and universities, Quinn said. Illinois State Superintendent of Schools Christopher Koch has said that public schools are planning

on laying off 13,000 or more teachers next year because of the lack of funds. Those teachers will be notified at the end of this month. The income tax surcharge would prevent those lay-offs, according to Quinn.

His \$55 billion budget relies on several spending cuts: reducing education funding by \$1.3 billion, decreasing travel for state employees, cutting \$214 million from state operations, cutting \$300 million by “stabilizing” public pensions, and decreasing state tax payments to local governments.

To create new jobs, Quinn had two ideas. One is to enact a public works program funded with state and federal resources that would repair the state’s transportation infrastructure and build schools; he said

it would create 400,000 new jobs. In addition, the governor proposed establishing a tax credit for job creation. The state would give a \$2,500 tax credit to small businesses for each full-time job they create in Illinois, which would result in 20,000 new jobs, the governor said.

Unlike his lengthy State of the State address, Quinn’s budget speech was scripted and lasted only 21 minutes. He said he was required to “make dif-

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difficult and painful choices” in the budget and asked lawmakers to do the same. Early on, he made a veiled reference to the budget plan of his Republican gubernatorial opponent, Bill Brady, who proposes state government make a ten percent cut “across the board,” in other words, in all agencies. Quinn said across the board cuts “are heartless and naïve” and hurt innocent people.

After his message, Republican legislative leaders criticized Quinn’s ideas on a statewide television program. Both Senate Minority Leader Christine Radogno and House Minority Leader Tom Cross called Quinn’s budget a “political ploy,” said it showed a “lack of leadership,” and said the Republicans have been kept out of the budgeting process. Cross said the governor is “holding education hostage for a tax hike.” He and Radogno criticized Quinn’s plan to borrow more money, and encouraged lawmakers instead to look more at pension reform and improving the management of Illinois’ Medicaid program to save money. Radogno added that Quinn’s idea to decrease state tax payments to municipalities was “unfair.”

On the public television program, “Illinois Lawmakers,” House Speaker Michael Madigan said that although citizens don’t want an income tax increase, the governor should be “admired” for calling

for one. While Republicans say Democrats haven’t allowed them to participate in creating a state budget, Madigan countered that they have “become non-participating drop-outs” in the budget process despite the Democrats’ efforts to include them and their ideas, because “they’re campaigning for 2010.”

In order to take effect, Quinn’s proposals would have to be approved by the Illinois General Assembly, which is currently projected to adjourn May 7.



See for Yourself

Watch the governor’s budget address or read the Fiscal Year 2011 Illinois State Budget Book at:

www.illinois.gov

Illinois Supreme Court Painting Comes Home

After the Illinois Supreme Court Building cornerstone was laid in 1906, its Building Commission held a national contest the next year for painters. The winner would create 13 murals for the grand, Neo-Classic Building, which is located in Springfield across from the Statehouse. There were 22 entrants in the contest, according to Madeline Gumble, Director of Administration with the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission (see adjacent article).

The unanimous winner was a Chicago Art Institute instructor who’d studied at the Paris Academie Julian, one of the best art schools in the world. His name was Albert H. Krehbiel and his winning entry was titled “Justice, With Precedence and Record.” Krehbiel’s earlier works had won top honors at international art contests and had been exhibited at the Louvre.

After he won, Krehbiel and his wife, a commer-

cial artist, got busy preparing for the extensive work ahead. They found a barn to turn into a studio and relocated it next to their Park Ridge, Illinois home. Krehbiel installed special pulleys and scaffolds to hold and move the large canvases, some of which were 21 feet by 16 feet. American canvases weren’t large enough, so he had to buy them in Paris.

Between 1907 and 1911, the artist meticulously researched, sketched, and painted the Supreme Court Building’s wall and ceiling murals with the help of his wife, Dulah. She served as a model for the female figures in his paintings, which represented aspects of law and justice. While painting, Albert relied on photos of Dulah wearing gowns she had sewn and he had positioned so the folds would lay just right.

Krehbiel didn’t have carte blanche over the paintings. He proposed designs which were often changed by the Building’s and murals’ overseers, according to Gumble. For example, in an article from

the Spring 1984 “Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society,” author Lizabeth Wilson writes that Krehbiel’s design for one large wall mural, called “Law and Equity,” included a priest and a “negro.” But the Supreme Court Commission, the State Architect, and/or the State Art Commission must not have agreed with him because the black man is absent.

One mural appears relatively unchanged; it’s an almost exact replica of Krehbiel’s painting that won him the Supreme Court commission -- “Justice, With Precedence and Record.” The mural is located on the Supreme Court’s west wall, in the direct eye line of the state’s highest justices.

Thanks to Krehbiel’s descendants and the Krehbiel Corporation, the painting which inspired that mural and won Krehbiel the Supreme Court commission, is now permanently housed in the Illinois Supreme Court Building. After Krehbiel finished the Supreme Court murals, he stored the painting. More recently it had been kept in descendants’ garages or basements and was damaged as a result. The Krehbiel family paid for its restoration and preservation, and the Krehbiel Corporation donated it to the Supreme Court, “where it belongs,” his grandchildren said.

On March 9, the Illinois Supreme Court convened to unveil the painting in a ceremony organized



Illinois Chief Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald joins the Chair and staff of the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission in unveiling Albert Krehbiel’s restored 1907 painting. From L to R: Madeline Gumble, Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission staff; Commission Chairman Jerry Solovy; John Lupton, Commission Staff; and the Chief Justice. Photo courtesy of the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission, Photographer David Blanchette.

by the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission. During the ceremony, Chief Justice Thomas R. Fitzgerald praised Krehbiel and the artistic legacy he left the Court. Fitzgerald said the first time he entered the Supreme Court’s room, his eyes “went directly to (Krehbiel’s) ceiling mural.” He added that the Court hopes to be able to clean and restore Krehbiel’s other murals in the Building.



The Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission

Ask the average citizen to tell you about state government’s executive or legislative branches, and they could probably display a basic understanding of them and how they have affected peoples’ lives. But ask the average citizen the same thing about the judicial branch, and the result may be different. A relatively new state commission called the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission hopes to change that.

“Public knowledge about the courts and their importance is known to be at a very low level,” says William L. Wheeler, Executive Director of the Commission. “An important part of our job will be to spark interest in the historic importance of the courts

with a connection to their ongoing importance as the sanctioned arbiters of society’s disputes.”

The Commission was created by legislation that was signed into law in August, 2007. It mandates the Commission to “assist and advise the Court in regard to the acquisition, collection, documentation, preservation, cataloging, and related matters with respect to historic aspects of buildings, objects, artifacts, documents, and information, regardless of form, relating to the Illinois judiciary.”

Wheeler says the Commission will concentrate on “identifying, preserving and interpreting Illinois’ judicial history” and will initially focus on the Il-

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Illinois Supreme Court. It hopes to: “write expanded, short biographies of the justices; write about all of the buildings where the Court has heard cases; and study the transformation of the legal education system (the movement from apprenticeships to law school) and the licensing of attorneys, which is under the Court’s purview.” In addition, the Commission would like to publish two comprehensive, online histories of Illinois courts, write about select cases that Abraham Lincoln handled in the Illinois Supreme Court, recognize judges and attorneys who have made unusual

contributions to the public welfare, develop curriculum materials for schools, hold lectures, and much more.

The Commission consists of nine members: Chairman Jerold Solovy, Cynthia Y. Cobbs, Jane Hayes Rader, Joseph A. Power, Jr., William J. Quinlan, Pauline Montgomery, the Honorable James R. Thompson, Kim B. Fox, and the Honorable Michael F. McClain.

Learn more about it at:
www.illinoiscourthistory.org.



Illinois Senate President John Cullerton and House Speaker Michael Madigan helped create the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission and attended the March 9 unveiling ceremony. Photo courtesy of the Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission, Photographer David Blanchette.

In Memoriam

On March 4, former Illinois department head **Gregory Coler** died in his Florida home. He was appointed Director of the Department of Children and Family Services in 1979 and later appointed the head of the Department of Public Aid. In 1987 Coler became a state agency director for Florida. He was 65.



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