

A Message from Senator Burzynski

Dear Friends:

As session ended May 7, 2010, the following are just a few areas of concern that I and many of my colleagues have concerning state spending. Most importantly, we have not seen a substantial effort on the part of Gov. Quinn to shrink state spending. Rather, he has chosen to either continue or expand spending in Illinois. Unfortunately, the state's spending problem has not been adequately addressed, and throwing more money at a failed system of government is not the answer.

I could have included many other areas of mismanagement, but I did not want to appear too "partisan." The items I've included have been well documented and hopefully will provide some insight into my thought process.

Brad

State Sen. Brad Burzynski, 35th Dist.

Important things to know about Illinois' government

Losing Jobs

- Illinois lost jobs at the rate of 650 per day last year.
- Raising your taxes will not solve this core problem.
- We need to grow jobs to grow revenues.

Debt Rising

A state government that has more than doubled the state's total bond debt in just the past eight years. It took the State of Illinois 185 years to acquire \$10 billion in bond debt and just eight years to add another \$15 billion to that figure.

Prisoner Early Release Fiasco

A state government that secretly released 1,700 violent criminals from prison early, robbers, burglars, and domestic abusers...some after serving as little as two weeks in state prison...in order to save less than \$1 million, while the Dept. of Corrections spent money on the following items.

- Over \$1 million spent per year on cable TV for prisons, including premium channels like SPIKE TV.
- Over \$7 million per year spent to provide stipends to prison inmates, including stipends to some who are not assigned work duties.
- In Sept of 2009, Corrections requested an "emergency procurement" for the "emergency purchase for fully baked sugar cookies" at a cost of \$109,000.
- After the Early Release program became public, the Dept hired a new employee at \$115,000 per year to come in and "investigate" their own program.

Blagojevich Directors Still Running Government

A state government for which 75% of the agency directors who served under Rod Blagojevich are still running their agencies, over a year later, for Pat Quinn. Pat Quinn has failed to "fumigate" state government and is simply presiding over Rod Blagojevich's Administration.

\$1 Million Disappearing Act

A state government that granted \$1 million to the Loop Lab School, which was headed up by Chandra Gill, a person who received a pardon from Rod Blagojevich for her felony battery conviction. The money was used to buy property from a Tony Rezko associate and the Loop Lab School closed shortly thereafter. The grant money has not been recovered.

Unnecessary Power Washing

A state government that entered into a \$500,000 contract with a connected contractor to power-wash state facilities, including Dept. of Transportation salt domes – some of which were virtually brand new.

Lax Medicaid Management

A state government that now spends more on state subsidized healthcare than it spends on education and continues to utilize extremely lax oversight when determining who qualifies to be on the program.

- A Medicaid program that allows a person to present one pay stub to the Department for verification of income. The Dept. then extrapolates that one paystub over a 12 month period to determine if the person is eligible for Medicaid. The applicant gets to choose which pay stub to submit, so they can choose their lowest pay stub of the year. This practice is ripe for abuse.
- A Medicaid program that allows the silence of an enrollee to allow them to stay on the program, when they may no longer be eligible.
- Federal law requires states to revisit eligibility for every enrollee each year. Illinois sends out letters to recipients asking if their economic circumstances have changed. If they do not reply, the Dept. assumes they are still eligible for the program and renews their eligibility.

Trading Free Space for Leased Space

A state government with state agencies trying to move out of free office space and into more luxurious office space – several blocks away - at a cost of \$500,000 per year.

- The Dept on Aging planned to move a part of their agency operations out of free, state-owned office space and into leased space a few blocks away that would have cost taxpayers over \$500,000 per year to rent. (Quinn has suspended this move, for now)

Canoe Czar

A state government that with a backlog of unpaid bills at \$6 billion, and Governor Quinn threatening to lay off almost 500 state policemen, created a new position for a “Canoe Czar” at the Department of Natural Resources for an old friend of Pat Quinn’s and paid him a salary of \$85,000 to coordinate the creation of new “water trails” and “paddling routes”. When this ridiculous move was discovered and it hit the press, they eliminated the position.

Clinging to Institutional Care

A state government that is way behind the national trend in moving people with developmental disabilities and mental health problems out of state institutions and into community care settings. Institutional care is for criminals, not people with developmental disabilities.

- Moving folks with developmental disabilities out of institutions and into community settings is a win-win.
- It costs half as much taxpayer money to care for a person in the community.
- In a state facility, it costs an average of \$130,000 per year to care for a person, and it costs around half that to care for the same person in the community.
- Moving in this direction would save the State of Illinois hundreds of millions of dollars and result in a better quality of life for the individual.
- It’s not happening because Governor Quinn and others are not willing to take on the union bosses who control the jobs at the facilities.

Still Paying for Blagojevich’s Illegal Healthcare Expansion

A state government that is still paying almost \$10 million per year for healthcare costs associated with 3,500 adults signed up for Medicaid by Rod Blagojevich illegally. These adults were signed up for state provided health insurance under a Blagojevich program expansion – despite the fact that the legislature did not approve the expansion - to provide healthcare for adults in families up to 400% of the federal poverty level (\$103,000 for a family of 5). The healthcare expansion was later found to be implemented in violation of state law, but per a court order, these individuals continue to receive services.

Automatic Pay Raises for State Employees

Notice that even in FY11, a year in which 17,000 teachers and 500 state police officers are threatened with layoffs, Governor Quinn will still grant minimum 4% pay raises to state employees.

Put Illinois to Work Program

A state government that, this year, when Illinois has \$6 billion in unpaid bills and record high budget deficits, is creating a new program called "Put Illinois to Work" at the Department of Human Services to use taxpayer money to hire low income people into temporary \$10/hr jobs. The state will fund this new program with at least \$10 million to draw down additional federal stimulus money for this program.

New Flat Screen TVs

A state government that, in September of last year, purchased nearly 60 LCD or Plasma flat panel HD TVs in sizes between 19" and 46" at a cost to taxpayers of \$18,300.

In conclusion ...

These are some examples of how your state has been, and is still being managed. There are many more examples. Senate President John Cullerton was quoted in the Southern Illinoisan (Jan. 22, 2010) as saying legislators have run out of places to cut state government. The implication is that there's nothing left to do but raise taxes.

Do you think enough cuts have been made to the state budget?

Do you think there is anywhere left to cut?

Do you think state government can find more efficiencies?

The simple truth is that your money is not being managed wisely in Springfield and your taxes should not be increased to cover for their inability to manage state government.