

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
95th GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE  
TWENTY-THIRD SPECIAL SESSION

1st Legislative Day

8/12/2008

Speaker Hannig: "The House will be in order. The Members will be in their seats. The Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly will come to order. Members and guests are asked to refrain from starting their laptops, turn off all cell phones and pagers, and rise for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. We shall be led in prayer today by Wayne Padget, the assistant doorkeeper."

Wayne Padget: "Let us pray. Dear Lord, we come before You today in sound body and mind, praying that on this day You grant us wisdom and guidance. During these hard times of negotiations we pray that everyone can come together on one common ground and resolve the issues for the people of Illinois. We pray for the men and women in our Armed Services both here and abroad. Provide them with Your protection and give them the strength to make it through these tough times. And let us also pray for the men, women, and their families who have made the ultimate sacrifice to defend our county. These things we ask in Your Son's name, Amen."

Speaker Hannig: "Representative Hoffman, you want to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance."

Hoffman et - al: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Speaker Hannig: "Roll Call for Attendance. Please punch your own switches only. Representative Currie, you want to give us the list of excused absences on the Democratic side."

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Currie: "Thank you, Speaker. Please let the record show that Representatives: Acevedo, Beiser, Brosnahan, Burke, Collins, Crespo, Feigenholtz, Graham, Hernandez, Jakobsson, Jefferson, Lyons, Patterson, Rita, Scully, and Soto are excused today."

Speaker Hannig: "And Representative Hassert."

Hassert: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let the record show that: Krause, Bost, Schmitz, Bassi, Rose, Sullivan, Munson, Durkin, Dunn, Coladipietro, Black, Tryon, and Watson, Lindner, and Wait will be excused."

Speaker Hannig: "Mr. Clerk, take the record. There are 83 Members answering the Roll Call. A quorum is present. Mr. Clerk, read the Governor's proclamation."

Clerk Mahoney: "WHEREAS, in the past six years, the State of Illinois has made the largest investment under any administration in Illinois history in elementary and secondary education, investing approximately \$8.4 billion in new money for elementary and secondary schools;

WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year 2009 budget contains an increase of \$360 million in education funding over the last fiscal year, including a \$32.5 million increase to expand early childhood education;

WHEREAS, since 2003, the State has increased the foundation level from \$4,560 to \$5,959 per student;

WHEREAS, despite these measures, there still exists vast inequities among school districts in the amount of per-pupil spending provided, with a disparity of more than \$17,879 in per-pupil operational spending between the

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highest and lowest spending elementary school districts in Illinois, \$14,005 in per-pupil operational spending between the highest and lowest spending high school districts in Illinois, and \$18,240 in per-pupil operational spending between the highest and lowest spending unit school districts in Illinois;

WHEREAS, these inequities are, in part, due to a reliance on property tax revenues as the primary source of school funding;

WHEREAS, these inequities require that alternatives to the State's reliance on property tax revenues as the primary source of school funding be considered;

WHEREAS, various proposals have been introduced through the years to alter the manner in which school districts receive funding in order to alleviate these inequities and ensure that every child in every school district receives the same high quality education;

WHEREAS, it is imperative that all necessary measures are taken to promote equity and equality in the State's education system; and

THEREFORE, pursuant to Article IV, Section 5 (b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby call and convene the 95<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, in duly constituted quorums capable of conducting business, in a special session to commence on August 12, 2008, at 3:00 p.m., to consider measures aimed at increasing school funding, improving the school funding structure, and eliminating any current

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inequities. Signed by Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor, State of Illinois."

Speaker Hannig: "Mr. Clerk, introduction of Resolutions."

Clerk Mahoney: "House Special Session Resolution... Twenty-third Special Session Resolution #1 and 2 are introduced."

Speaker Hannig: "The Chair recognizes our House Majority Leader, Representative Currie."

Currie: "Thank you, Speaker. I move for the immediate consideration and the suspension of all applicable House Rules so that we can adopt Twenty-third Special Session House Resolutions 1 and 2."

Speaker Hannig: "You've heard the Lady's Motion. All in favor say 'aye'; opposed say 'nay'. The 'ayes' have it. And the Motion is adopted. The Chair recognizes the Majority Leader, Representative Currie."

Currie: "Thank you, Speaker. Would the Clerk please read Twenty-third Special Session House Resolutions 1 and 2."

Clerk Mahoney: "Twenty-third Special Session House Resolution #1.

RESOLVED, that the Rules of the House of Representatives of the Ninety-Fifth General Assembly be adopted as the Rules of this Twenty-third Special Session, so far as the same may be applicable, and that the Committees of the House of Representatives of the Ninety-Fifth General Assembly, shall constitute the Committees of the House during this Twenty-third Special Session. Twenty-third Special Session House Resolution #2.

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RESOLVED, that the Clerk inform the Senate that a majority of the House of Representatives has assembled, pursuant to the proclamation of the Governor, convening a Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly, and are now ready for the transaction of business."

Speaker Hannig: "The House Majority Leader, Representative Currie, moves for the adoption of the Twenty-third Special Resolutions 1 and 2. All those in favor signify by saying 'aye'; all those opposed 'nay'. The 'ayes' have it. And the Resolutions are adopted. Representative Kosel, for what reason do you rise?"

Kosel: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On a point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hannig: "State your point."

Kosel: "I have with us today the 4-A champion softball team from Lincoln-Way Central High School. They had a thirty-three (33), nine (9) record. They're standing in the Speaker's gallery. I have to tell you how excited they are. This is the first time in the 30-year history of this schools softball program that we have had someone go downstate and win the state championship. Under their coach Dick Mandel... Mandella, excuse me, and I would like to have the House congratulate them, and adopt the Resolution, please."

Speaker Hannig: "I'm advised, Representative, that we actually can't adopt the Resolution in Special Session, but we do extend our congratulations to the ladies and we will adopt the Resolution at the appropriate time."

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Kosel: "Thank you. So, the Resolution cannot be adopted in Special Session, but we will adopt it in regular Session. Just so that the team knows that, that will happen when we convene in regular Session. Thank you very much, and congratulations, girls. We're very proud of you."

Speaker Hannig: "Representative Gordon, for what reason do you rise?"

Gordon: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Point of personal privilege."

Speaker Hannig: "State your point."

Gordon: "Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, if I may have your attention, please. This evening at the State Fair there will be a very special auction of grand champions, and I would just like to state that the grand champion steer, junior division, is from Grundy County and is owned by a very wonderful young man named Kevin Carey. And interestingly enough it was also bought from another family in Grundy County by the name of Baudino. For those of you that are north of I80 that will be your steak dinner tonight. So, if... those of you would give a congratulations to Kevin Carey and his grand champion steer I sure would appreciate it, and congratulations to Grundy County for being number one... And that, by the way, came from 4-H. So, for those of you who supported 4-H, and you know who you are, thank you very, very much for that. I appreciate it."

Speaker Hannig: "Representative Franks, for what reason do you rise?"

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Franks: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to comment on why we're here. I was thinking about this last night and put a few ideas together and... We're here in Springfield for a Special Sess... for a Special Session where the Governor's asked us to spend a relatively short amount of time on solving the education funding problem that has plagued our state since I've been in grade school. The system is designed to fail. As many as 80 percent of our schools recently have been deficit spending. This is a very serious situation that requires special attention, and I do applaud the Governor for calling a Special Session on education funding. I am distressed, however, that... that he has limit it to such a small amount of time and then will bring us back tomorrow to deal with a capital Bill, which he calls a compromise, but is nothing of the sort. And it's the same amount that he first sought; without any new revenue sources. And he still has failed to provide any line items on the projects. And has failed to sign the ethics Bill that would prevent him from profiting from state contracts. It's clear that this is not a serious attempt in solving the state's problems. The Governor seems to think that the General Assembly is a stage for his endless preening without any serious involvement in the legislative process. We have been here since January and the Governor's had ample opportunity to provide ideas for legislation; which he simply didn't do. One of the Bills that he will Amendatorily Veto, would allow individuals up to the age of twenty-nine (29), to remain on their parents

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health insurance. That's the same Bill I proposed three (3) years ago and at that time Governor Blagojevich came out against the Bill. Now, through an Amen... Amendatory Veto he claims this is the way to go. It would of been much easier if the Governor simply would have come out for my Bill, or proposed a separate Bill at this time rather than attempting to rewrite other Bills that we had previously voted on. Now last weekend, I had the opportunity to spend time with my family fishing in Canada and it was a wonderful time where we had a chance to relax and get together and the down time gave me the opportunity to think about the state of our government. We all know that things are difficult. Our Governor is under siege as his top fund raiser Tony Rezko was convicted for using his influence to acquire state jobs and contracts for donors to the Governor's campaign. His other chief fund-raiser, Chris Kelly, has been indicted for tax fraud. Finding after finding has come from the Auditor General indicating that this state fiscal position is just a mess. We are pushing payments back to our health care providers, farther and father back, and not paying them a... the reimbursement that will allow them to take on additional patients. So as a result, instead of having more access to health care, those that need it most have less. Our pension and Medicaid liability continues to grow while no real efforts are made to change the system. Programs that work, such as the Cease Fire in Chicago, are dismantled while dozens of our children are being murdered. And we called today for a

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Special Session, this is important, that will not address the social service cuts where real people who need our help most are going to be harmed beyond anything we can imagine. And instead of trying to help those individuals in the mental health care community and the substance abuse community and the homeless community and the battered women community, the Governor calls us back with just a short amount of time to deal with highly complex problems without proposing a Bill or a revenue source. It is clear that the Governor cares more about saving face than saving lives. He cares more about creating and fostering conflict than doing what is right. It seems to me that we are in sort of a political limbo, in the sense that we are trying to see how low a politician can go, and every time the Governor sets the bar he astounds me on how much lo... lower he can actually go. It is a given that our political system will always have conflicts because we are so diverse. But we need to reject the divide and concur ideology and never put our own personal agendas in front of what is best for our state. And we need to be able to reach across party lines and cease to be so partisan, because what has resulted is that the entire process has been high jacked and the citizens of the State of Illinois are those that are suffering. Our political system is more divided now than the people in our state. What I mean is that we have become so polarized and partisan in Springfield, which is not indicative of how the citizens want us to act and how they feel about the issues. My tenure in the General

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Assembly has been under Governors Ryan and Blagojevich. It has been quite an eye-opener for a farm boy from Marengo. I know we can do better and the people need us to do better. Unfortunately, these few days that we are down here will not yield any results. I believe that a Constitutional Convention is required to right the ship of Illinois. Every 20 years the voters have the ability to decide whether we are going to have a Constitutional Convention. And now that almost 40 years have passed I believe it's time to revisit this living, breathing document. If you're happy with the status quo and how things are going in Illinois, then you should come out against a Constitutional Convention. But if you think that we need to do better for the future of our children and grandchildren and that we need to better, I... I urge you to be a proponent of the Constitutional Convention so we can stop this cycle of cynicism and corruption that has seized our government."

Speaker Hannig: "Representative Cross."

Cross: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I... in some ways, on some... a few points, I agree with the previous speaker. Today's a joke. No agenda, no plan, no Bill. No plan for action on anything with respect to education funding and we come down here on day 60... day 60 of a Special Session called by the Governor. Sixty Special Session days is more ar... there are more days in the Special Session days he's called than in many Sessions. This year we were in Session 45 days. Think of what we could've done in those 60 Special Session

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days, but in reality we got very little done. So, I agree with the previous and the blame goes directly at the Governor for today's debacle. It is a joke, it's a sham, it's a shame, it's a farce. It is clearly designed to score points, and it amplifies the in fighting going on between the Speaker and the Governor in an attempt to score political points. And the exercise of today's Special Session clearly is the fault of the Governor, and he's to be blamed. But where I disagree with the previous speaker is that if you look back on the things that haven't gotten done, there's plenty of blame to go around. And the blame goes around to the party in control. The party in control now happen to be the Democrats. I think we all know that. You've had 6 years to address education funding. Every year you talk about an inequities in school funding. Every year you say we've got to do something different. You have the House, you have the Senate, you have the mansion, and you've done absolutely nothing. All of you say that you are for jobs. All of you say that you are for a capital Bill. All of you say you are for infrastructure. We are in the 6th year of complete Democrat-dominated control and nothing has happened. Every year you on the other side of the aisle say we got to do something about property tax relief in this state 'cause all of our constituents come up and ask us about property tax relief. Year 6 you've done absolutely nothing. We have heard from our constituents on a variety of other issues, gas tax relief. I've been here for 6 years. I say this to the previous speaker and all of

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you; you've done nothing about gas tax relief, absolutely nothing. I'd like to think that maybe because you're in control you could do something about the sales tax increase in the City of Chicago and in Cook County led by the Democrats in Cook County, Tod Stroger. You've done nothing to stop Cook County from being the highest sales tax county in the country. And then we heard a little bit over there, and we've heard a little bit about this... about the bad things we've done to human service providers in this state, and we have. But we're in year 6, and in year 6 it got as bad as it could get with respect to our budget. You know, one year you balanced the budget by raiding the pension system; one year you balanced the budget by not paying Medicaid bills. This year you had the audacity not even to balance the budget and blame everybody else, unfortunately, to the detriment of DASA providers, autism providers, DD providers, the list goes on and on, hospital providers, training for work forces, the list goes on and on. You say you're for ethics. Year 6 nothing's happened. You say you're for recall. Year 6 nothing has happened. You say you want to reform the pension system. Year 6 nothing has happened. You say you're for Medicaid. We're in year 6, you've done absolutely nothing. You have done a pretty good job of pointing fingers across to the other side of the building and say we... we're not for a pay increase. Now, we were for a 3.8 percent pay increase 2 months ago when we passed a budget that wasn't balanced and we hurt DASA providers and we hurt those that provide services to

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those with autism. The list goes on and on. But we made sure that we got our 3.8 percent pay raise. But that other pay raise of 7 percent, we're not for. Those big, bad people in the Senate, they better kill it. So the Governor, he's at fault today. This is a joke. It's an embarrassment. He deserves every bit of the blame... every bit of the blame for today, and to bring us down here with no plan, with no agenda, not even to file a Bill is about as bad as it gets. But for those of you on the other side of the aisle, who run this place, you have absolutely nothing to show for your control over the last 6 years, absolutely nothing to show. What I used to think was dysfunction has now turned into reckless acts, reckless behavior, 'cause your inability to get along, your divisiveness, your fighting, you're finger-pointing, you're acut... accusing nature has meant little for the people of the State of Illinois, and people are harmed and hurting. The one thing that you seem to want, on your side of the aisle, is an income tax hike. In fact, your Leadership talks about the need for an income tax hike. We have unemployment at one of the highest levels in the history of this state. We have gas prices at \$4 a gallon; we have energy bills climbing; we have unemployment climbing; we have mortgage foreclosures climbing; we have sales tax at the highest level in the country in Cook County; and you want to raise income taxes. That's the one thing you want to do. It never ceases to amaze me the way you run this place. So, yeah, Governor, believe me, you're not going to

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get any sympathy from us 'cause you have caused half of these problems. But those of you on the other side, you're responsible for the other half. Thank you, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Hannig: "Before we adjourn, we have our State Treasure with us, Alexi Giannoulis. So, why don't we give him a round of applause. Representative Gordon, maybe you can get him to come out and bid on that steer. Any other business to come before the Special Session before we adjourn? Then Representative Currie moves that the Special Session adjourn until Wednesday, August 13, at the hour of 5 p.m. All in favor say 'aye'; opposed 'nay'. The 'ayes' have it. The Motion is adopted. And the Special Session is adjourned."