



*A Union of Professionals*

**Illinois Federation  
of Teachers**

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July 14, 2008

Hon. Emil Jones  
Illinois Senate President  
327 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706



An affiliate of  
the AFT, AFL-CIO

Dear President Jones:

On behalf of the 90,000 members of the Illinois Federation of Teachers, I am asking you and the Illinois Senate to override several of the governor's vetoes of education budget lines, as well as constitutional offices' and other agencies' budgets for FY 2009. We urge you to immediately reconvene a regular session of the Senate to act on the overrides.

The IFT is making this same request of the Illinois House in the name of our statewide membership that includes education faculty and staff at elementary, secondary, community college and university levels as well as state workers under five constitutional officers.

Higher education programs appear to have carried the brunt of education vetoes. The governor's cut of \$9.5 million of IBHE matching grants for federal dollars seems particularly ill-advised. Testimony in legislative committees indicated these matching state dollars capture federal money for higher education at a rate of \$10 or \$12 to every \$1 put in. At those figures, a veto of \$9.5 million could result in lost funding for Illinois of \$100 million.

Listed here are many of the budget vetoes by agency which we have identified thus far affecting IFT members. We strongly urge you to restore them to full funding as passed by the Illinois General Assembly on May 31. We think there is time in November to cooperatively work on funding and carefully crafted budget reductions to meet the state's balanced budget requirement.

We are also still reviewing the governor's veto list to determine the impact on our members in other areas of government. For example, the Illinois constitutional offices are facing cuts which severely affect dozens of support staff represented by our public employees union, IFPE Local #4408. And there are other agencies whose budget vetoes are still under review.

One agency in particular is of special concern to IFT. That is the severe 30% reduction in the expected '09 budget for the Illinois Education Labor Relations Board. If these vetoes are allowed to stand, IELRB will no longer be able to function as an effective agency. To quote IELRB Executive Director Victor Blackwell, "As you know, this is a

substantial amount of money for an agency our size and the effect of this reduction would be devastating to our operations.”

The IFT calls for an override and restoration of the following specific budget items and will contact you with more in the days ahead:

Illinois Education Labor Relations Board

\$455,000 total including \$358,800 reduction from the 2008 budget which represents a 25% cut in agency personnel and operations plus \$96,000 new dollars necessary to maintain bare minimum staffing levels

Illinois State Board of Education

\$2.6 million in agency operations

Illinois Board of Higher Education

\$39.5 million for grants and special initiatives including:

\$9.5 million state matching grants for federal funding

\$21 million for HSEGA

\$2.8 million for DFI

\$3.8 million for HECA Innovation grants

\$200,000 for the P20 Council and Public Agenda

\$2.2 million in legislative add-ons

Illinois Community College Board

\$10 million for base operating grants

\$5 million in Student Success grants

\$2.8 million for P-16 Initiative grants to restore dual-credit program

\$814,000 in legislative add-ons

Student Assistance Commission

\$18 million for MAP grants to incorporate FY 2004-05 tuition and fees into the MAP formula or increase the maximum award

Thank you for your prompt attention and response to this serious budget situation facing both Illinois state government and Illinois public education. If you have any questions, I and my staff are available to talk to you and your staff regarding our request for these veto overrides.

Sincerely,



Ed Geppert, Jr.  
President

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