

News

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. . . from the Illinois House of Representatives

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FORD ADVANCES BILL TO ELECT ICC COMMISSIONERS

Commission's approval of rate hikes shows accountability needed

SPRINGFIELD – State Rep. La Shawn K. Ford (D-Chicago) on Wednesday advanced legislation through a House committee requiring members of the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) to be elected by the public instead of by political appointment.

“Not a single current member of the Illinois Commerce Commission voted against Commonwealth Edison’s recent rate hikes, and that is troubling,” Ford said. “And what is even more troubling, this commission is unelected and unaccountable to the people of this state.”

House Bill 3602 was introduced by Ford during a rare meeting of the Committee of the Whole, which saw the ICC called before House members to answer questions about their approval of rate increases for Commonwealth Edison and Ameren. Ford’s legislation will require public elections for members of the ICC beginning in 2008. The new commission would have five members who are nominated and elected according to party affiliation. One member would be elected from each judicial district in the state and members of the commission would elect one member to serve a two-year term as chairperson.

In 2006, the ICC approved a plan that allowed electric utilities to raise rates, claiming that competition exists in the Illinois power market. Ford recently helped pass legislation in the House that would roll back the increases and refund consumers for amounts paid over the 2006 levels. That legislation has not been approved for debate by Senate leadership.

“The ICC is a group that previously operated under the radar, but we now know they have the power to cause tremendous suffering to families and small businesses,” Ford said. “Whenever we have the chance to make government more accountable to the people, we should take it.”

For more information on House Bill 3602, contact Rep. Ford’s district office at (773) 378-5902.

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