



February 23, 2016

Governor Rauner's Budget Address - With No Offer of a Budget

Sitting at my desk in the Illinois House of Representatives, I attended Governor Bruce Rauner's budget speech in Springfield on February 17, 2016. The Illinois Constitution clearly presents the responsibilities of the state of Illinois to its people:

"We, the People of the State of Illinois - grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberty which He has permitted us to enjoy and seeking His blessing upon our endeavors - in order to provide for health, safety and welfare of the people; maintain a representative and orderly government; eliminate poverty and inequality; assure legal, social and economic justice; provide opportunity for the fullest development of the individual; insure domestic tranquility; provide for the common defense; and secure the blessings of freedom and liberty to ourselves and our posterity - do ordain and establish this Constitution for the State of Illinois."

In Article VIII, Section 2(a), our Illinois Constitution states: "The Governor shall prepare and submit to the General Assembly, at a time prescribed by law, a State budget for the ensuing fiscal year. The budget shall set forth the estimated balance of funds available for appropriation at the beginning of the fiscal year, the estimated receipts, and a plan for expenditures and obligations during the fiscal year of every department, authority, public corporation and quasi-public corporation of the State, every State college and university, and every other public agency created by the State, but not of units of local government or school districts. The budget shall also set forth the indebtedness and contingent liabilities of the State and such other information as may be required by law. Proposed expenditures shall not exceed funds estimated to be available for the fiscal year as shown in the budget."

Governor Rauner gave his budget address to the state of Illinois, but he didn't present a budget for the General Assembly to consider. The Illinois Constitution then outlines the role of the General Assembly after the governor proposes a budget in Article VIII, Section 2(b): "The General Assembly by law shall make appropriations for all expenditures of public funds by the State. Appropriations for a fiscal year shall not exceed funds estimated by the General Assembly to be available during that year".

Illinois continues to struggle to adopt a balanced budget for FY16 after Gov. Rauner vetoed the budget passed by the General Assembly. Illinois is now 8 months with out a budget for FY 16, and now we have the task of passing a budget for FY 17. After every day that goes by without a state budget, Illinois tax payers are on the tab for \$30,000,000.

Recently, for the second time, Governor Rauner vetoed funding for the Monetary Award Program (MAP) grant program, which provides college tuition assistance to more than 130,000 low-income students throughout Illinois. The students who receive tuition support are scholastic achievers who are working toward accumulating the credentials needed for a good-paying job.

The fight between Democrats and Republicans in Springfield currently continues, while essential services like MAP Grants are cut. More now than ever, voters will need to get involved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LSK', with a stylized flourish at the end.

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District