



May 23, 2017

Who is Worse – Trump or Rauner?

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.”

Governor Bruce Rauner campaigned for governor with the promise to shake up Springfield. He also promised to be compassionate to the residents of Illinois, and to turn Illinois around. Well, Illinois is all shook up, but it's not being compassionate.

The General Assembly has until the end of May to put in place a complete spending plan - a failure to do so could result in Illinois defaulting on loans and cutting pension contributions, revenue to the universities, and payments to social service providers. We are on a course so that we will have more than \$28 billion in unpaid bills by June 2019.

The fight between Democrats and Republicans in Springfield currently continues, while essential services like WIC, child care, LIHEAP-CEDA, Medicaid, summer jobs for youth, senior citizens programs, and many other essential programs and services are very much on the brink in Illinois.

Let's turn from Illinois to the whole country. What is President Trump proposing in his federal budget? The proposed budget contains cuts to Social Security Disability insurance, which covered over 10 million recipients as of December 2015. It would save about \$72 billion through changes to disability programs over the next ten years. Other cuts include \$193 billion to the food stamp program (SNAP, or LINK) over the next decade. Trump's budget director has stated that the overall goal would be to tighten work requirements in order to get able-bodied adults off of social safety net programs. In education, the budget proposes eliminating federal subsidies for student loans while instituting a new income-driven repayment program. The White House projects the combination would save \$143 billion over a decade. Some of the savings would go to boosting White House priorities on security and economic investment. The budget would boost defense spending by \$54 billion for the next fiscal year and includes another \$2.6 billion for new border security measures, including \$1.6 billion to build walls and replace existing barriers.

I urge the people of Illinois to rise up and demand a state budget solution immediately and end the state budget impasse. The end of the state budget impasse can be the difference between a person having life, liberty, and the ability to pursue happiness. We also must fight the proposed federal budget cuts that will harm so many of our most vulnerable community members. It is up to all of us to fight for justice in the budget process, both state and federal.

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