

# Things to Watch at the State Level

## Challenges:

- State Level: Budget Deficit/No budget, Anti-union governor, Public Knowledge
- Federal Level: Secretary of Education, Supreme Court Nominee, New Administration, Anti-Union Sentiment across the Country

## Governor's Priorities

- "Either the General Assembly authorizes me to make cuts, not my first choice but I'll do that, or let's work together to do a balanced budget with cuts and, what I prefer is, a balance of cuts, and what I prefer is, a balance of cuts, some revenues and major structural change."
  - "Structural Change" = Limit the power of unions; no collective bargaining

## House Priorities (Currently a simple majority of Democrats in the House)

- Cut the corporate tax; Reinstate the Economic Development for a Growing Economy credit; hurts local businesses; Create a capital bill; Raise the minimum wage; Special surcharge tax on millionaires

## Senate Priority "Grand Bargain" (Currently a super-majority of Democrats in the Senate)

- 13 bills and 1 resolution where the success of any 1 bill is tied to the success of the other 12.
- Bills are in a state of flux; currently:
  - IEA supports the bills that: reform school funding, increase the minimum wage, contribute to Chicago's Teacher Pension Fund, fund higher education, & raise corporate income tax; no opinion on gaming/casino
  - IEA opposes: SB13: Property Tax Freeze (it is where districts get revenue for our schools) and SB11: Pension Reform (It is unconstitutional).
- Response from Cinda Klickna (IEA President): "It's neither grand nor a bargain."

## IEA Legislative Priorities

- Keep Local Control of Charter Schools
  - How the system works: A charter school group puts forth a proposal to a school board. If the school board denies them, they go to the State Charter School Commission to overrule that decision. Right now, the commission can only approve a certain number of charter schools. There are proposals to take the cap off of the number of charter schools the commission can approve.
- Substitute Teacher Shortage
- Homeless Student Assistance
- Minimum Salary for Teachers
- Trauma-Informed Policies/ ACES
- Higher Education Funding
- PERA - Addressing issues in teacher evaluations
- Teacher Hiring Incentive Initiative
- ESSA (Reauthorization of the 50-year old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA))
- Pensions:
  - Oppose "Consideration Model" where state workers would have to choose between two diminished benefits
  - Oppose end of career reductions

- Support of Anti-cost shift to local districts proposals (Sponsored by Republicans)

### **Budget (Yes...We still don't have a budget.)**

- School Funding Commission
  - Commission created by gov in July 2016
  - Bipartisan, bicameral commission appointed
  - Final report to gov on Feb 1 includes a framework for a new funding formula
    - The Framework is an integrated formula that would combine many, but not all, the existing sources of funding into a single distribution formula.
    - The way it works is that it creates a target based on the needs of its student population that would be set regardless of location or local wealth.
    - When new money is added, districts farthest away from adequacy to receive any additional resources first.
  - The commission learned that this is *very* complicated.

### **Dick Durbin**

- His message: Take a deep breath. We have to be organized for a long time.
- On Trump: Trump is setting out to redefine America, and we cannot let him do that.
- His Advice to IEA Members
  - We need to change the game by organizing and reaching out to people.
  - When you lobby, say "let me tell you a story." Stories humanize issues.
  - Share things on social media. People get their news on FB.

### **Opportunities**

- Public Education is still one of the most discussed topics by parents, elected officials, & media
- Good things are happening in our schools every day
- Educators are the best messengers

### **Stay Updated:**

- Legislative Update
- IEA Website/ NEA Website
- IL General Assembly Website
- Governor Relations Department