

Update 2009

Dear Neighbor,

I am happy to provide you with my 2009 Legislative Update. Inside you will find a summary of some of the major issues that the General Assembly faced during the most recent legislative session.

This past year has been a frustrating legislative session, even by Springfield standards. On topics ranging from ethics and reform to crafting a new budget, the first part of this year saw a lot of activity, good and bad. While I left Springfield satisfied that a lot of good work had been accomplished during this past legislative session, there is still a lot of unfinished business to attend to as we continue to try to move Illinois forward.

Passing ethics legislation is never easy in Springfield, but in the wake of former Governor Blagojevich's impeachment, the window to pass reforms did open a bit wider. As a result, the General Assembly was able to pass some promising reform bills - while falling short on others. I was happy to sponsor and help pass two significant reform measures, supported by the Illinois Reform Commission created by Gov. Quinn and chaired by former U.S. Attorney Patrick Collins. These bills will help shed light on decisions that are made by government officials. By demanding more transparency, we can build a more open and honest government, and start to restore the shattered public confidence. You can find more information on these bills inside this newsletter.

You may have recently heard that the General Assembly passed and Governor Quinn signed a \$31 billion statewide public works package, known as a capital bill. While I fully supported the capital projects and the 400,000 Illinois jobs they will create, I could not support tax increases on motorists, wine, liquor, and candy, in addition to legalizing video poker across our state. As a result, I was the only Chicago Democrat to vote against these taxes and the expansion of gaming.

It is an honor to serve you as the State Representative of our district. If you would like to share your thoughts or concerns with me, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



John Fritchey
State Representative
11th District



- Fixing State Government
- Reform? Not So Fast...
- Capital Budget - At What Cost?
- Getting Things Done in Springfield
- Town Hall Meetings

Legislative Update 2009



State Representative • 11th District

John Fritchey

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John Fritchey - John
"Now more than
ever, we need state
government to act
responsibly and use
our tax dollars
wisely. As I have
been in the past, I
remain committed
to working to make
sure that our state
government works...
for us."

2009 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Upcoming Events



Fixing State Government

Many of the recent political scandals in Illinois arose from improper influence in state contracts and leases. To address this issue, I was proud to sponsor two bills supported by the Illinois Reform Commission created by Gov. Quinn and chaired by former U.S. Attorney Patrick Collins. The first bill was **SB 51**, which reforms our current procurement laws by insulating these decisions from political influence, especially from elected officials. Under this bill, the Executive Ethics Commission, instead of the governor, would make the appointment of Procurement Officers.

In order to increase public access to the workings of government, and to put more transparency into the process, I also sponsored **SB 189**, which strengthens and expands the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). This bill creates a Public Access Counselor within the Attorney General's office to resolve FOIA disputes and assist the public in obtaining information about the workings of governmental bodies. Because a little bit of sunshine can go a long way toward cleaning up our state.

Reform? Not So Fast...

A lot of attention was given to a campaign finance reform bill, **HB 7**, aimed at curbing the role of money in campaigns and the political process by capping contributions. What started as an excellent concept was unfortunately watered down to a point where I believe it would undermine the very goals it was intended to achieve. Joining me in opposition to the final bill were, both Patrick Collins as well as the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform. As a result of the shortcomings of the bill, I was ultimately one of only six Democrats who broke with leadership and refused to support the bill. Fortunately, Gov. Quinn wisely vetoed the bill, pledging to work with reformers in order to fix our broken system – *the right way*.



Capital Budget – At What Cost?

The good news is that the General Assembly passed a capital bill that will provide for badly needed infrastructure projects ranging from road and bridge repairs to school construction across our state. While this is an overdue and welcome development, the means by which these projects are to be funded is very troubling. The money for these projects is coming not only from increased taxes on everything from driver's licenses to beer, alcohol and candy, but even more problematically, from the legalization of online lottery ticket sales and video poker in Illinois. I have long-maintained that permitting legalized gambling in bars and restaurants throughout our neighborhoods is an unwise and problematic way to fund state government. Standing on this principle, I was the *only* Chicago Democrat to oppose this measure.

GETTING THINGS DONE IN SPRINGFIELD

Reforming TIFs — A significant portion of our constantly increasing property tax bills results from Tax Increment Finance (TIF) districts, which have been created by the City Council at a rapid pace. Essentially, TIFs divert our property tax dollars to be used later as incentives for private developers or businesses. Even worse, sometimes these companies take our money, and then move their jobs out of state. To prevent this from happening in the future, I drafted and passed **HB 4326**, which would require companies to repay their grants to the taxpayers if they choose to close or relocate their business. There is a lot of work still to be done to reform TIFs, and I plan to keep fighting for you on this important issue.

Power to the People — Recent events in our state understandably increased awareness that Illinois needs to join the ranks of other states that empower voters to be able to recall their governor. To permit this authority, I am a co-sponsor of **HJRCA 31**, legislation providing an amendment to our state's constitution to provide for the recall of the governor by petition of the state's electors and for the election of a successor.

Improving Senior Health — Senior citizens deserve access to appropriate health services based on the level of care they need. We can accomplish this by providing the right resources to allow older adults to receive the services they need – at home, in a community setting or in a residential facility. To that end, I helped pass **HB 752**, legislation that will lead to a plan to restructure our state's service health care delivery system for adults, age 60 or older. This plan will ensure that the health, and the rights, of all older Illinoisans to services are protected.

A Cleaner Environment — While our work to protect our environment and increase energy efficiency is far from done, we made significant strides this past year addressing these issues. To start, I helped pass into law **HB 1013**, the Green Buildings Act, aimed at developing more energy efficient buildings in the state of Illinois. Through greener building codes, we will reduce the costs of energy, preserve the environment, cut pollution, and moderate peak energy demand. I am also happy to support **HB 422**, the Illinois Clean Car Act, currently pending in the General Assembly. If passed, this measure will require a 37% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions for most cars and small SUVs and is estimated to reduce total air toxics by 8 to 12.6 % by 2020.

Cutting Legislative Pay — During these trying times, when businesses are closing and people are being laid off, I believe that the Legislature needs to lead by example. To that end, I helped pass legislation eliminating the Legislature's cost of living salary increase and mandating legislators to take up to 12 unpaid furlough days due to the current economic and budget crisis. As I have consistently done in the past, I will vote against legislation providing legislators with a pay raise.

Ending Animal Cruelty — Puppy mills are factory-style breeding facilities that mass-produce puppies in overcrowded, filthy, and inhumane conditions with inadequate shelter and care. The puppies that survive these conditions are taken from their mothers for sale at approximately 8 weeks of age, when they are highly susceptible to contagious diseases and very sensitive to behavioral stress. To get rid of these puppy mills, I am currently the chief sponsor of **HB 198**, also known as *Chloe's Bill*, after a puppy mill survivor. If passed, the legislation will ensure that dogs are treated humanely in the breeding industry, as well as in the pet store industry. While this bill is still pending in the General Assembly, I helped pass **SJR 56**, which created a Joint Task Force whose sole mission is to investigate large-scale, commercial puppy breeders and pet stores, and how best to regulate them.

Expanding Education — I have been a longtime advocate for supporting a cross-section of choices that will provide a quality education for our children. In order to provide more options for Illinois families, I co-sponsored **SB 612**, which doubles the number of charter schools in the state from 60 to 120, dramatically increasing a student's opportunity to be able to attend a charter school. In addition, to ensure that we continue to improve all schools, this bill creates a task force to research the impact of charter schools on public education in the state of Illinois.

Having the opportunity to share my ideas and receive immediate feedback directly from constituents has been instrumental in my ability to be effective in our community. In addition to attending numerous meetings in the community throughout the year, I am pleased to also host various events throughout the district. Here are a few upcoming events that I am hosting; I hope to see you there.

Town Hall Meeting

Monday, November 23 • 7:00 p.m.
Bucktown-Wicker Park Library
1701 N. Milwaukee Ave.

Town Hall Meeting

Monday, November 30 • 7:00 p.m.
Sulzer Regional Library
4455 N. Lincoln

For more information,
call 773-871-4000.

Over 200 Backpacks Donated

As students prepared for the new school year, I joined forces with the Office Depot Foundation to donate over 200 backpacks to local families throughout the community with children entering the 1st Grade in order to help them get off to a good start.



(From left to right): Representative John Fritchey, Michelle Brown, Child Care Supervisor, Don Hamilton, Director of Child Care & Julia Kittle, Development Coordinator at St. Vincent de Paul Center.