



Illinois Community College Trustees Association Action Alert

A message from Jake Rendleman, ICCTA President

June 1, 2004

The Illinois General Assembly was unable to complete its business before the constitutional adjournment deadline of May 31. Since the deadline was not met, the General Assembly continues its business, but legislation cannot be immediately enacted with a simple majority vote. Beginning June 1, a 3/5 majority vote to adopt a budget and most other legislation is required in both the Senate and House. The higher voting requirement changes the dynamics of budget negotiation, since the minority party now has a significantly elevated level of participation. Also beginning on June 1, legislators are no longer paid a per diem for their time in Springfield. The next significant date in the legislative process is July 1, the beginning of Fiscal Year 2005.

Both houses of the General Assembly adjourned the session Tuesday afternoon with plans to return to Springfield at the call of the Senate President and the Speaker of the House. Members have returned to their home districts and will return to Springfield when they receive a 24-hour notice and a call to reconvene. The Illinois Senate has scheduled perfunctory session days for every Monday, Wednesday and Friday through the month of June while the House has scheduled every weekday during June for a perfunctory session. A perfunctory session is a scheduled minimal opening of a chamber for the purpose of reading materials into the record.

One of the reasons that a final adjournment could not be achieved is the lack of agreement on a budget. The House has passed a budget to the Senate, and the Senate has passed a different budget to the House. The Senate has approved new taxes and fees for the Fiscal Year 2005 budget, but the House has not.

Yesterday the House passed a budget for community colleges that is at the Governor's recommended funding level plus \$16.7 million for the City Colleges of Chicago. The House-approved budget is now languishing in the Senate Rules Committee. The Senate later approved a budget for community colleges that is similar to House version, except that \$1 million more was added to our "hold harmless" grant funding. The Senate-approved budget is now languishing in the House Rules Committee.

No one knows when the General Assembly and the Governor will agree on a budget for Fiscal Year 2005.

ACTION PLAN -- Continue to contact your legislators!

Our message should now be:

"Please continue to support the \$16.7 million added to the community college budget for City Colleges of Chicago for fiscal year 2005. Also support level funding for community colleges. This would provide the community colleges with the Fiscal Year 2004 budget and eliminate the Governor's proposed cuts in funding for FY05."

For additional legislative updates, contact ICCTA at iccta@communitycolleges.org or 1-800-454-2282.