



Illinois Community College Trustees Association Action Alert

August 5, 2004

2004 Spring Session Wrap-up

The Illinois General Assembly set new records this year as it completed its spring session 54 days after the May 31 constitutional deadline. Adjournment came on July 24, shattering the previous record of July 19 in 1991. During the overtime session, Gov. Rod Blagojevich called 18 special sessions, which surpassed the six special sessions called by Gov. Dan Walker in 1974. The session was marked by many kinds of conflict, and for the third consecutive year (another record), the state budget had to be crafted at a lower level than the prior year for many state agencies.

FY 05 BUDGET (Senate Bill 3340)

In the final days of the session, lawmakers developed a budget that resulted in at least level funding (Fiscal Year 2004 funding for FY 05) for higher education and a \$385 million increase for K-12. On July 30, the Governor approved the state budget without making any changes to it. The community college system received a total FY 05 budget of \$295.5 million in state support, which is a \$6.3 million (or 2.2%) increase above the FY 04 funding level – but **9.6% below community colleges' FY 02 funding level**. The state's FY 05 community college budget can be described as the Governor's recommended budget plus additional grants of \$15 million for the City Colleges of Chicago, \$250,000 for Lincoln Land Community College, and \$160,000 for Illinois Valley Community College.

The following shows a brief history of state funding grants to community colleges:

Fiscal Year 2002 --	\$326,985,500
Fiscal Year 2003 --	\$303,174,600
Fiscal Year 2004 --	\$289,136,200
Fiscal Year 2005 --	\$295,489,000
* Governor's recommended FY 2005 budget	\$280,079,000
* General Assembly add-on for City Colleges	\$ 15,000,000
* General Assembly add-on for Lincoln Land	\$ 250,000
* <u>General Assembly add-on for Illinois Valley</u>	<u>\$ 160,000</u>
* Total for FY 2005	\$295,489,000

BILLS PASSED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Lawmakers also approved several bills of interest to community colleges. Gov. Blagojevich has signed several bills into law, while others await his consideration.

House Bill 2587 -- Transit Services Pilot Project

ICCTA Position: SUPPORT

Establishes the Illinois Transit Ridership and Economic Development Pilot Project Program to fund a maximum of eight pilot projects to increase Illinois transit service and facilities. Among the participating programs is the Community College Coordination Project, which will provide discounted bus passes for community college students, faculty, and staff in Danville and Champaign/Urbana. All funding is subject to appropriation by the General Assembly.

STATUS: Awaiting action by the Governor

HB 4247 -- Clarification of Verbatim Records (Illinois Open Meetings Act)

ICCTA Position: SUPPORT

Prohibits the inspection of the verbatim record of a closed meeting, including for discovery purposes, in a judicial proceeding other than in a judicial proceeding to determine whether the Illinois Open Meetings Act has been violated.

STATUS: Awaiting action by the Governor

HB 4506 -- Hate Crimes in Educational Facilities

ICCTA Position: SUPPORT

Provides that it is a Class 3 felony for a first offense to commit a hate crime in an administrative facility or public or private dormitory facility of or associated with a school or other educational facility.

STATUS: Signed into law as Public Act 93-0765

SB 2112 -- Property Tax Caps / Homestead Exemption Increase

ICCTA Position: OPPOSE

Increases the ceiling for household income eligibility for the Senior Citizen Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption from \$40,000 for taxable years 1999 through 2003 to \$45,000 for taxable years 2004 and thereafter. Provides that, for taxable years 2004 and thereafter, the maximum reduction under the Senior Citizens Homestead Exemption shall be \$3,000 in all counties, and the maximum reduction under the general homestead exemption shall be \$5,000 in all counties. Creates an alternative general homestead exemption that applies to counties that choose to adopt the provision by ordinance. Provides that the amount of the exemption is the equalized assessed value of the homestead property for the current tax year minus the adjusted homestead value. Defines "adjusted homestead value" as the lesser of (i) the property's base homestead value increased by 7% for each tax year after the base year (2002 or 2003) through and including the current tax year, or (ii) the property's equalized assessed value for the current tax year minus \$4,500 in Cook County and \$3,500 in all other counties in tax year 2003 or \$5,000 in all counties in tax year 2004 and thereafter.

STATUS: Signed into law as Public Act 93-0715

SB 3107 -- Faculty Diversification

ICCTA Position: SUPPORT

Amends the Illinois Consortium for Educational Opportunity Act to change the program's name to the Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois Program. Provides that Illinois institutions that grant doctoral degrees must have representation on the program board. Makes changes concerning the definition of "institution of higher education," the program board, assistance to graduates, subcommittees, reporting, grants, and other matters.

STATUS: Signed into law as Public Act 93-0862

SB 2918 -- Increase in School Dropout Age

ICCTA Position: SUPPORT

Increases the compulsory school age from 16 to 17 years of age, with exceptions. Provides that certain provisions that apply to truant officers apply to the regional superintendent of schools or his or her designee in a school district that does not have a truant officer. Makes changes concerning the compliance procedure for persons who fail to send a child to school. Allows certain students to enroll in graduation incentives programs and lists programs that qualify as graduation incentives programs.

STATUS: Signed into law as Public Act 93-0858

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