



Guest Column From
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For Immediate Release
March 21, 2010

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Lots of talk, no action

Following the removal of Rod Blagojevich from office last year, the residents of Illinois charged the legislature and Gov. Pat Quinn with the responsibility to change the status quo and end the business-as-usual that has plagued state government and cost taxpayers billions of dollars for many years. Gov. Quinn and the Democratic legislature leaders talked about the need for reform and change, but at the end of the day it was all talk and no action.

Fast forward to this year and we are faced with the largest budget deficit in Illinois history. Filling a \$13 billion budget hole isn't easy; it can't be done in one swift move.

Gov. Quinn's solution is to increase taxes by 33 percent. Such an increase would represent a nearly \$1,000 increase in taxes per household in Illinois. At a time when one out of every 10 individual in Illinois is unemployed and families struggle to make ends-meet, such a move would be irresponsible and shows nothing more than financial incompetence.

That's why my Republican colleagues in the House and I have proposed a series of reform proposals aimed at cleaning up the ethical and budgetary mess in Springfield.

Unfortunately, Speaker of the House Mike Madigan has refused to allow these proposals to be heard for a vote. Just this week, we attempted to get these issues onto the floor of the House to finally allow debate on the issues; however, the vast majority of House Democrats refused our request and voted to side with Speaker Madigan and bury the legislation.

These proposals were good, common sense, bipartisan approaches towards reforming our economic system and restoring the trust that has been eroded by years of fiscal mismanagement in Springfield.

For example, one proposal would require any legislation involving state spending be available publicly for seven days prior to General Assembly action. This will allow a full week for taxpayers to study, and offer suggestions on state spending. Another proposal would require members of the General Assembly to take 12 furlough days, much like we did last year.

Finally, a third bill would require the state to adopt full accrual accounting standards which will allow everyone a real glance at the state's finances, to fully understand how much money is moving in and out of the state coffers.

These proposals, and other like proposals, have the potential to solve problems that exist in Illinois, and each of them should be allowed to be debated in the General Assembly. However, because of the unwillingness of the Democratic majority to explore these real reform measures we will continue to be in the position we are today.

The political games in the Springfield must end. We must work together, Republicans and Democrats, to resolve the issues facing the people of Illinois.

State Rep. Randy Ramey represents the 55th Legislative District.