

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
93rd GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
TRANSCRIPTION DEBATE

152nd Legislative Day

6/30/2004

Speaker Madigan: "The House shall come to order. We ask the Members and our guests in the gallery to turn off cell phones, pagers and laptop computers. And we ask our guests in the gallery to rise and join us for the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. We shall be led in prayer today by Daniel Horn who is a member the Saint Benedict's Church in Auburn, Illinois."

Horn: "God, our Father, we entrust United States of America to Your loving care. You are the rock on which this nation was founded. You alone are the true source of our cherished rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Send Your spirit to touch the hearts of the Members of this General Assembly. Open their minds to the great worth of human life and the responsibilities that accompany human freedom. May they be led by Your wisdom through challenging decisions. Keep them united in mind and heart as they go forward with the work of this great state. Make their vision clear and their will strong. May they always be mindful that true liberty will only be found in human solidarity. Turn their hearts toward the communities of this state, to understand the ways of others, to offer friendship and to find safety only in the common good of all. Amen."

Speaker Madigan: "We shall be led in the Pledge of Allegiance by Representative Verschoore."

Verschoore et - al: "I pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it

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stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Speaker Madigan: "All right, once again, only punch your own button. Roll Call for Attendance. Representative Currie."

Currie: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please let the record reflect that Representatives Dunkin, Feigenholtz, Hamos, Jones, Molaro, Morrow and Osterman are excused today."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Bost."

Bost: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please let the record reflect that Representatives Biggins, Schmitz, Sommer, Tenhouse and Winters are excused."

Speaker Madigan: "The Clerk shall take the record. There being 98 Members responding to the Attendance Roll Call, there is a quorum present. Mr. Clerk. Mr. Sacia."

Sacia: "Mr. Speaker, point of personal privilege."

Speaker Madigan: "State your point."

Sacia: "If you would, bear with me for just a minute. (plays the song, 'I wanna go home') Thank you, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Madigan: "Representative Lindner."

Lindner: "Yes, Mr. Speaker. I wonder, could you give us some kind of schedule? It's my understanding that there's a big convention in town this weekend and the people who stay in hotels don't have any place to sleep. Now, I brought these pillows this morning because Representative Eileen Lyons and Representative Carolyn Krause told me last night that the only place they have to sleep is out on these benches under the... by the Stratton Building. So, would you pass this pillow please over to Eileen and pass this one back to

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Carolyn. And I was wondering if you could convince the Governor not to call a Special Session or maybe you could do something to make them more comfortable? Could you provide blankets and some mosquito repellent so they'll be more comfortable this evening on those benches? Thank you."

Speaker Madigan: "I had planned to address this question tomorrow, but since you've been so kind as to raise it today. Tomorrow my plan would have been to announce a schedule that would have had everybody away from the Capitol through the 4th of July weekend. And for those... for you students of the Constitution, ya know, there's another guy on the second floor that may have some different ideas. So, all we can do is wait until tomorrow and we'll advise you then. But in the meantime, on page 4 of the Calendar, on the Order of Senate Bills-Third Reading, there appears Senate Bill 2256. Mr. Clerk, read the Bill."

Clerk Mahoney: "Senate Bill 2256, a Bill for an Act in relation to public bodies. Third Reading of this Senate Bill."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Brauer."

Brauer: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Members of this House. 2256 will give a small community of Curran the ability to incorporate and take care of some problems that they have with their septic tanks. Senate Bill 2151 would do the same thing. It was passed out of this House with 0 'no' votes. It was passed out of the Senate with 0 'no' votes. But it took some water district rights away from the City

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of Springfield. Senate Bill 2256 will restore those rights. It'll be status quo. I'd urge an 'aye' vote and will answer all questions."

Speaker Madigan: "The Gentleman moves for the passage of the Bill. There being no discussion, the question is, 'Shall this Bill pass?' Those in favor signify by voting 'yes'; those opposed by voting 'no'. Have all voted who wish? Has Mr. Capparelli voted? Has Mr. Capparelli voted? Has Mr. Turner voted? And has Mr. Saviano voted? The Clerk shall take the record. On this question, there are 104 people voting 'yes', 0 voting 'no'. This Bill, having received a Constitutional Supermajority, is hereby declared passed. On page 7 of the Calendar, on the Order Senate Bills-Second Reading, there appears Senate Bill 2258. Representative Currie."

Clerk Mahoney: "Senate Bill 2258, a Bill for an Act concerning public bodies. Second Reading of this Senate Bill. No Committee Amendments. Floor Amendment #1, offered by Representative Currie, has been approved for consideration."

Speaker Madigan: "Representative Currie on the Amendment."

Currie: "Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to withdraw Amendment 1."

Speaker Madigan: "Withdraw Amendment #1. Are there any further Amendments?"

Clerk Mahoney: "Floor Amendment #2, offered by Representative Currie, has been approved for consideration."

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Currie: "Thank you, Spe... Speaker and Members of the House. This Amendment would provide for a home equity commissions. But after the initial 5-year period of participation, people could access the value of their homes to the program at 3 rather than 5-year intervals. I know of no opposition. The Amendment also includes language we saw earlier that would enable people to serve more than 2 terms on such a commission, if appointed by the mayor."

Speaker Madigan: "The Lady moves for the adoption of the Amendment. On the question, the Chair recognizes Mr. Franks."

Franks: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Madigan: "The Sponsor yields."

Franks: "Madam Majority Leader, I'm looking at our analysis here. And with the new Bill, House Amendment #2 would become the new bill, correct?"

Currie: "That's... that is correct."

Franks: "And in that it would take out the House Amendment 1, which would have eliminated the term of two consecutive terms."

Currie: "And that is in Amendment #2 as well."

Franks: "Oh, it is in number 2?"

Currie: "Yes, and that is actually language we had voted on in this House earlier but there had been no movement in the Senate."

Franks: "I... the Senate vote... was this a shell Bill in the Senate? Because I see there was a Senate vote and it looked like it was 33 - 25. But I..."

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Currie: "It was a shell Bill and that explains the Senate vote."

Franks: "Okay. Thank you very much."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Black. Mr. Black."

Black: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield?"

Speaker Madigan: "The Sponsor yields."

Black: "Representative, I'm not completely familiar with a home equity assurance. Is that... does this deal with condominiums or what? Could you bring me up to speed on that, please?"

Currie: "Sure. This is a program that's been exist... in existence for sometime. Triggered, first of all, by a petition signed by a significant number of voters in a particular area. Then on a referendum vote, a decision to create a home equity commission. The commission members are appointed by the mayor. The commission helps people maintain the value of their homesteads. And the idea is that if there is a decline in value, the individuals experiencing the decline, not by virtue of their failure to maintain the property, can be made whole."

Black: "Wha... what powers would be held by these commissioners?"

Currie: "The commissioners make a determination whether when someone makes a claim against the... the insurance program, whether that is valid, whether it is legitimate. And they also, I assume, pay attention to the values that are assigned to the property. There are requirements about

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appraisals and so forth and so on. So, they run the program."

Black: "Wou... would the... would the commissioners have any authority to order a home owner to fix a particular problem that was, in the... in the opinion of the neighborhood or neighbors, was helping deteriorate the neighborhood? I mean, do they have the power to go in and say, you have to fix that, the porch fell off, you have to put it back?"

Currie: "They would not. They could, of course, go to building court when issues of that kind are addressed. Sometimes it maybe helpful for community members to go to court and encourage the court to take action against slumlords or owners who are not maintaining their properties appropriately."

Black: "Did this... did this evolve out of the old neighborhood busting ta... tactics that used to be quite prevalent a few years ago? I'm sure you'll recall, as I do, there would be a rumor that..."

Currie: "Panic peddling."

Black: "...racially or ethnically somebody was moving into the neighborhood. Unscrupulous realtors would then buy up the property at, ya know, distressed prices, turn around and make a good profit. Is that where this came from?"

Currie: "I... I believe that that is part of the history, the genesis of the creation by statute of these commissions."

Black: "Okay. And... and this only impacts Chicago, correct?"

Currie: "I believe that is right."

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Black: "And why... why is it necessary? I mean, on the one hand, if I read your Amendment and what you've told me, on the one hand, you're trying to protect neighborhood values. I... I'm not... that sounds like a good idea. But we've already passed a Bill that holds assessments... well, actually, appraisal... caps assessments to 7 percent and we were told then that it's... was because of absolute skyrocketing property values in Chicago. So, the two don't seem to be in synch to me."

Currie: "Well, if th... remember first of all, all this Amendment does is to make a small change in the way an existing home equity commission operates. So, the decision to create the commission was made many years ago. In the second place, that overall there was a significant increase in property valuations during the recent assessment does not mean that that increase applies in every neighborhood and certainly doesn't mean that it applies to every house."

Black: "Okay. But it would seem that if... if you had a specific term to serve and then you would move on... these people aren't paid, I assume."

Currie: "No, they are not paid."

Black: "Then why... why would they want to, in effect, have no term limit? What, they would appointed and serve the rest of their natural life? Or..."

Currie: "No... no... no. So... so, it's... there are terms. But right now, the statute prohibits anybody from serving more than two consecutive terms. Now, I'm not for term limits. I don't know why term limits were part of this statute when



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the program was created. But the reality is the mayor makes the appointments. Community organizations can nominate people to serve on the governing commission. And I don't see any reason in the world..."

Black: "All right. Well..."

Currie: "...why we should say to someone who's served two years or four years, 'That's enough, we don't want you anymore.' So, all this Amendment does would be to say that an individual may be appointed to serve more than two consecutive terms."

Black: "And I intend to agree with you. But I see a scenario where if somebody is appointed by the mayor and serves 10, 12, 16, 20 years on this commission, they... obviously they're going to become very familiar with that area, neighborhood or whatever."

Currie: "Yes."

Black: "They see trends developing, gentrification. My... is there anything that would prohibit these people from buying up properties, using their knowledge of... of what's occurring in the neighborhood before the individual property owner might have noticed or notification, buying up some properties and then making a nice profit as the area... as many neighborhoods in Chicago are beginning to gentrify, values go up very quickly. It would seem that by not limiting their terms, we may be putting some people at a very advantageous position to perhaps make a little money in the real estate market."

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Currie: "Well, I just would point out that any community organization and we... of course there aren't... we don't establish by statute community organizations. Any member of a community organization who chose to commit him or herself to that activity over many years would be in precisely the same situation."

Black: "But... but they wouldn't be in a situation where they're concentrating a great deal of their energy and effort on property values. That's the only thing that concerns me."

Currie: "Yes, but these are... these individuals are not the ones that are doing the appraisals. They're not the ones who are assigning value."

Black: "Okay. All right. Does... does the mayor appoint Republicans to serve on these commissions? I know he might have trouble finding some in Chicago, but I'm sure there are some there."

Currie: "The mayor appoints with the consent of the corporate authorities, the alderpeople, nine individuals, seven of those he chooses must come from nominees submitted by community organizations."

Black: "So, did I hear you correctly, the al... alderpersons in Chicago would perhaps recommend appointments to the mayor?"

Currie: "No. What I said was that the mayor, with the consent of the corporate authorities, I think that means alderman, with their consent the mayor appoints, but the mayor appoints based in part upon nominations offered by community organizations."

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Black: "All right, fine. Thank you very much, Representative.  
Thank you."

Currie: "Thank you."

Speaker Madigan: "Question is, 'Shall the Amendment be adopted?' Those in favor say 'yes'; those opposed say 'no'. The 'ayes' have it. The Amendment is adopted. Are there any further Amendments?"

Clerk Mahoney: "No further Amendments. No Motions filed."

Speaker Madigan: "Put the Bill on the Order of Third Reading. Mr. Clerk, has the Bill been read? Can we read the Bill on Third Reading today?"

Clerk Mahoney: "The Bill has not been read a second time, previously and must remain on Third Reading."

Speaker Madigan: "Well, put the Bill on the Order of Third Reading. On the Order of the Supplemental Calendar #1, there appears a Motion by Mr. Reitz concerning House Bill 599. Mr. Reitz."

Reitz: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a Motion to Override the Total Veto on House Bill 599. In... this... on the Override Motion, this Bill, if you remember, amends the Downstate Firefighter's Pension Code, establishes a new surviving spouse annuity. It also added a compound 3 percent annual increase for sur... surviving spouses. And there was a clause in there to take care of... of firefighters that died in the line of service. Their... their... the spouses and their surviving benefits for spouses and children of firefighters that died in the line of

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service after 1988. There were six people that were involved in that and I'd be happy to answer any questions."

Speaker Madigan: "The Gentleman moves to override the Governor.

Is there any discussion? Representative Slone."

Slone: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the Gentleman yield?"

Speaker Madigan: "The Sponsor yields."

Slone: "Representative Reitz, can you tell us what the Governor... what reason the Governor gave for the Veto?"

Reitz: "Thank you. I appreciate that, probably should've mentioned that to start with. But the Governor's reason was that said basically there is important choices in State Government, to fund important services and programs. He thought we should do that without asking the people of Illinois to pay more taxes. He remains committed to... in principle and cannot support this legislation because it does have a provision in there that allows him to exempt bypass property tax caps. And he says he... that he thought this would ask for a property tax increase, so therefore he vetoed it."

Slone: "Thank you."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Black."

Black: "Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Will the Sponsor yield? Representative, this was... as I recall, we passed this on a Conference Committee Report. Did we not?"

Reitz: "Correct."

Black: "Do you have... I... I can't find in my... notes on the computer. What was the vote? What was the final vote, do you know?"

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Reitz: "I will pull it up. I think it was 80... 85, 86 votes."

Black: "Yeah... Representative Froehlich told me it was... at more than 80 'aye' votes."

Reitz: "Eighty-one."

Black: "Right?"

Reitz: "Yeah."

Black: "Let me... let me make sure that we're all on the same wavelength here. This amends the Downstate Firefighters Pension Code. Correct?"

Reitz: "Correct."

Black: "It does not increase the pension of a firefighter. Correct?"

Reitz: "Correct."

Black: "What it does do is to grant a rather modest increase to the spouse of a firefighter. In other words, a widow, a widower, or the children of a firefighter who's no longer living. Correct?"

Reitz: "Correct. It's for the surviving spou... the beneficiaries."

Black: "And as I recall in the original discussion, it... it had been some time since the, what we would normally refer to as the widow and orphans, survivor's benefits had been increased. I... I don't remember the exact number of years, I apologize. But as I recall in our discussions, it... it had been a number of years before this had been... prior to this adjustment."

Reitz: "Right. That's correct. And I should also mention that this also was an agreed Bill between the... basically the..."

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the interests of the municipalities and the firefighters and they con... contribute 1 percent."

Black: "I... I'm glad you pointed that out, because this had been negotiated for a considerable period of time between the municipalities and the... firefighters and so forth. And this does not include the City of Chicago Pension Code."

Reitz: "Right. That's correct."

Black: "I think they had an adjustment in their's either this General Assembly or maybe the one just past. But it's not been very long ago that we addressed the Chicago firefighters' pension for widow, orphans, children et cetera. Right?"

Reitz: "Right. My recollection was last year."

Black: "Okay. Thank you very much, Representative. Mr. Speaker, to the Motion. Ladies and Gentlemen of the House, first of all, let me... let me thank the Governor, and I'm not being facetious. The Governor could've held this Bill for a number of weeks. He did not have to take action on it as quickly as he did. And I... and I... I think I was negligent yesterday in not also thanking the Governor for his rather prompt action on Representative Osmond's Bill about the school that has an unfortunate structural defect in her district. The Governor, if he had wanted to play games with this, could have waited until we were home and then vetoed the Bill and we would've had to wait until the Veto Session in the fa... in November to come back and address that. So, I... I'm assuming that he did that Veto so we would have our opportunity to vote not only on the... the

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school issue in Representative Osmond's district but also on the downstate firefighters that I maintain was an agreed Bill. And again, he could've held this Bill, could've vetoed it in late July or early August. And I... I appreciate his quick action. And as I said yesterday, I don't take a gubernatorial Veto lightly. But in this case, in all due respect to the Governor, I disagree with him. I think it was an agreed Bill. This does not enhance a firefighter's pension. It does give a reasonable amount of money to a surviving spouse and surviving children. And every once in awhile, because of inflation, cost of living, you have to revisit those issues. I think it was a fair Bill. I think it passed with a healthy majority. I stand in strong support of the Override Motion. And I would hope that you could vote 'aye'."

Speaker Madigan: "Representative Currie."

Currie: "Thank you. Question to the Sponsor. Representative, you were showing us the Veto message. It sounds as if the Governor thought it was a very good idea to provide these new benefits for firefighter widows and orphans. Would that be a fair characterization of the Governor's Veto message?"

Reitz: "That would be my interpretation. He thought it was a very good Bill."

Currie: "But he found it objectionable that there was an exemption to the tax cap. Now, I... I would... I would wonder whether if we'd just sent him the benefit increase, whether he might not have signed it. But of course, that would've

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meant that the local governments might not have had a mechanism through which they could pay for it. It seems to me the responsible action here is to override the Veto of House Bill 599 so we can do the right thing for the widows and orphans and we can make sure that the people who have to pay those benefits have the resources so they can write the checks. I think it was irresponsible of the Governor to suggest that while our... our commitment was a good commitment, the fact that we were offering people a way to pay for it was not to his liking. So, I would urge us to join in the effort to override this Veto."

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Reitz moves that this Bill pass, the Veto of the Governor notwithstanding. This Motion requires 71 votes and is final action. Those in favor signify by voting 'yes'; those opposed by voting 'no'. Have all voted who wish? Have all voted who wish? The Clerk shall take the record. On this question, there are 74 people voting 'yes', 30 people voting 'no'. This Motion, having received the required Three-fifths Majority, the Motion to Override prevails and the Bill is declared passed, notwithstanding the Governor's Veto. The Chair is prepared to adjourn. Mr. Parke."

Parke: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just curious, as Members are, as to what you foresee the upcoming schedule to look like. Again, many of us, if not all of us, have scheduled programs over the 3rd and 4th and 5th of July and would like to know what you foresee for us in the upcoming days?"

Speaker Madigan: "Mr. Spark... Mr. Parke."



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Parke: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Madigan: "There was an earlier question by Representative Lindner, but let me repeat what I said earlier which is that I had planned to announce tomorrow that my plan would be for the Members to be away from the Capitol Building through the 4th of July holiday. However, as you know from the Constitution, there's another person involved in all of this who occupies an office sometimes down on the second floor. All right?"

Parke: "I appreciate that, Mr. Speaker. Let me ask, is there anything as individual Legislators we can do to help expedite the process to come to some kind of conclusion? It's been alluded by... by some people in the press, by some constituencies that individually as Legislators that we can make something happen. Is there anything that you see that we can be doing as individually or collectively to expedite the process to a conclusion?"

Speaker Madigan: "Well, Mr. Parke, speaking for myself, I think all of the Members have done very well through this impasse, because all of you have held yourself available to come to Springfield when appropriate to vote on Bills that were appropriate to resolution of the impasse. All of you have worked very cooperatively and diligently with your respective Leadership teams to express your views on the construction of a budget and how the money should be distributed. So, I think it's fair to say that all Members have... have done their part. Okay, that... that's my view of

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the situation. There are always critics and... and so, I think we just have to, ya know, stay the course."

Parke: "Well, as a Member of the loyal opposition, I would say that in my observation of how you've run the chamber, that I think you've done a good job also, Mr. Speaker. And that... I think that... on some issues, I think, we will be unified as a... as a chamber on direction. And I would say that, of course, as Republicans we stand ready to... to vote on whatever legislation comes before us. And so, again, thank you, Mr. Speaker."

Speaker Madigan: "Representative Currie for a Motion."

Currie: "Thank you, Speaker. I move we suspend the posting requirements so that House Bill 7307 and House Resolution 1064 might be heard in the Committee on Human Services and House Joint Resolution 93 in State Government Administration."

Speaker Madigan: "When?"

Currie: "I believe tomorrow."

Speaker Madigan: "Okay. Mr. Black agrees. You've all heard the Lady's Motion. Is there leave? Leave is granted and the Motion is adopted. Representative Currie for a Motion."

Currie: "To adjourn?"

Speaker Madigan: "I... I believe that's it, yes."

Currie: "All right, I certainly do move..."

Speaker Madigan: "The... the Lady moves that we... the stan... the House stand adjourned until July 1 at 12 noon for a regular Session. Those in support of that Motion say 'aye'; those

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opposed 'no'. The 'ayes' have it. The Motion is adopted. The House does stand adjourned until tomorrow, July 1, 12 noon."