

State of Illinois
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Springfield, Illinois 62706

George H. Ryan
GOVERNOR

June 28, 2002

To the Honorable Members of
The Illinois Senate
92nd General Assembly

In signing Senate Bill 2313, I take another necessary step to help balance the state budget for Fiscal Year 2003.

This legislation, which I endorsed previously, would stop the allocation of a previously authorized cost-of-living wage adjustment in FY 2003 for designated state officials whose pay is controlled by the Compensation Review Board. This law affects me, my cabinet, all other constitutional officers and members of the General Assembly.

At a time when slumping tax revenues have forced you and me to make more than \$1 billion in budget cuts, facility closures and thousands of employee layoffs in order to even out spending and revenues, it would not be appropriate for high-ranking state officials to accept a COLA.

In addition to signing this bill, I asked my Cabinet and executive staff to join me and work one day without pay. I am very proud that they agreed to do so as a cost-saving measure.

About 12,000 state employees who are classified as "merit compensation" employees -- non-union, mid-level managers, supervisors and support staff who work in state agencies -- are getting raises. Very few of them report directly to me. Most report to my cabinet directors. All 12,000 of them took a furlough day and sacrificed to help pay for important state services.

Unfortunately, their 40,000 co-workers represented by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees also will get raises during FY 2003 as required by their contract. Despite a tough budget year, the leadership of AFSCME refused to discuss any reduction in raises, even if that meant the loss of thousands of state jobs.

Although I have the power to forbid raises for merit compensation employees, such action would be unfair to them. It would not be right to reward AFSCME employees with a raise when they refused to sacrifice for the greater good while punishing merit compensation workers who did do the right thing.

With these clarifications, I have signed Senate Bill 2313.

Sincerely,
George H. Ryan
GOVERNOR