



Shared Values. Shared Responsibility.

NEWS RELEASE

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Coalition Supports Quinn's Veto Pledge

No vacation for lawmakers until they pass 12-month budget that is morally and fiscally responsible, group says

(Springfield, IL) A coalition of 50 organizations representing millions of Illinoisans applauded Governor Quinn today for demanding that lawmakers fulfill their shared responsibility to craft a 12-month budget that fully funds vital community-based programs throughout the state. The coalition warns that a Democratic "Doomsday Lite" proposal to cut funding by 30% for programs ranging from domestic violence and child abuse prevention to care for seniors and people with disabilities would be devastating. A proposal floated by Republicans to pass a temporary budget based on FY '08 spending would not only lead to harmful cuts in services, but would do nothing to alleviate the anxieties of caregivers or the families they serve.

The coalition is urging all 177 lawmakers and Governor Quinn to remain in Springfield for as long as it takes to reach a bipartisan agreement on a full, 12-month budget that cuts non-essential services and revenue to close the budget gap.

"The families of the people we serve aren't making vacation plans, they're cancelling them, and trying to figure out what they're going to do about child care, about health care, and who is going to have to quit their job to take care of an aging parent or disabled family member that the state is poised to dump out on the street," said the Reverend Dr. Denver Bitner, head of Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). "Lawmakers shouldn't be making any vacation plans either, until they pass a budget that is not only fiscally balanced, but also morally balanced."

The coalition says they have seen signs of progress. Under mounting pressure in recent weeks, Democrats and Republicans have publicly acknowledged that the state has a moral

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responsibility to fully fund community-based programs, and they have recognized that the proposed cuts are creating anxiety for families that are directly impacted. Privately, rank-and-file lawmakers from both parties have admitted that a tax increase will be needed as part of the budget solution.

But coalition members say that Democratic leaders are pushing a "Doomsday Lite" budget that would still have devastating consequences, including:

- 15,600 seniors will lose community care programs that enable them to remain in their homes and out of nursing homes, and another 35,000 seniors will see those services reduced;
- 88,585 children will lose day care services, threatening their parents' ability to work;
- 12,900 women will lose life-saving breast cancer screenings, and 45,000 men will lose prostate cancer screening and prevention services;
- 12,000 teens and adults will lose treatment for drug and alcohol addiction;
- 60,000 pre-school children will lose their early childhood education;
- 11,000 cases of elder abuse will go uninvestigated;
- Half of the state's child abuse investigators will be eliminated, raising caseloads to 20 to 1;
- Nearly 14,000 rape and child sex abuse victims will be denied crisis services;

The coalition also says a plan floated by Republican leaders to delay passage of a 12-month budget for 30 to 60 days would only prolong anxieties for families impacted by the cuts and for the 100,000 caregivers across the state that stand to lose their jobs. The coalition predicts that without an agreement in place between lawmakers from both parties and the governor on both cuts and new revenue, lawmakers aren't likely to meet a new deadline, and would only insist on another extension. The coalition also points out that even the possibility of cuts has forced many local service providers to lay-off employees and close programs already. Those cutbacks would still continue even with a temporary spending plan, and the uncertainty would create greater instability in the state's infrastructure of community-based service providers.

"Governor Edgar warned that it would be irresponsible of our state to implement a temporary budget, and he's absolutely right," said Nancy Ronquillo, head of Children's Home + Aid, one of the state's largest and oldest providers of care for abused and neglected children. "We've been forced to issue notices of potential lay-offs to over 700 employees throughout Illinois. We have nearly 800 abused and neglected children that we have to worry about and workers who deserve 30 days notice before they are laid off. No agency can go through that every month without creating total chaos."

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“These cuts aren’t just morally irresponsible, they are fiscally irresponsible, because every dollar we cut from preventative programs ends up costing taxpayers \$6 to \$8 down the road,” warns budget expert Ralph Martire, head of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability. “When we turn our back on abused children, people with mental illness, our seniors and disabled, they don’t just magically disappear. They turn up again in our special education classes, prisons, emergency rooms and nursing homes, but at much greater cost to the taxpayer.”

The coalition says they will continue to press lawmakers from both parties to live up to their shared responsibility to invest in vital programs that promote the common good. More public protests are being planned following a rally two weeks ago that drew 5,000 protesters to the State Capitol and candlelight vigils held this week across Illinois. Opponents of the cuts are also being urged to visit www.IllinoisCommonGood.org to e-mail lawmakers as well as call toll-free at 888-616-3322 to speak to their lawmakers in support of a responsible budget.

Coalition members include:

- Ada S. McKinley Community Services, Inc.
- AIDS Foundation of Chicago
- A Safe Haven
- Campaign for Better Health Care
- Casa Central
- Center for Economic Progress
- Center for Tax and Budget Accountability
- Chestnut Health Systems
- Chicago Child Care Society
- Chicago Christian Industrial League
- Chicago Coalition for the Homeless
- Chicago Metropolitan Battered Women’s Network
- Children’s Home + Aid
- Chicago Jobs Council
- ChildServ
- Corazón Community Services
- Deborah’s Place
- Don Moss & Associates
- Emergency Fund
- Gads Hill Center
- Hamdard Center for Health and Human Services
- Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights
- Housing Action Illinois
- Illinois Action for Children
- Illinois Center for Violence Prevention
- Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
- Inner Voice
- Jane Addams Hull House Association
- Kids Hope United
- Lutheran Advocacy—Illinois
- Lutheran Child and Family Services of Illinois
- Lutheran Social Services of Illinois
- Mid Central Community Action, Inc.
- Neumann Association
- New Foundation Center
- Project Oz
- Protestants for the Common Good
- Rosecrance Health Network
- Safer Foundation.
- Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
- SEIU Healthcare Illinois
- Southeastern Illinois Counseling Centers, Inc
- Spannaus Consulting
- Supportive Housing Providers Association
- The Baby Fold
- United Cerebral Palsy of Illinois
- United Way of Metropolitan Chicago

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