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SUAA Mini Briefing

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Conference Committee Public Hearing

The first Conference Committee hearing was held in Chicago on June 27th to a standing room only audience. Clearly, the Committee is not threatened by Governor Quinn's July 9th deadline to have a solution in place and ready to pass by both Houses. An immediate implementation date requires a super majority which would not be attainable. A July 1, 2014 implementation date would only require a simple majority which actually means the Committee has time to take into consideration new approaches along with previous proposals.

The usual testimony came from Ty Fahner, President of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago, who testified for over 40 minutes with nothing new to offer. He continues his support of Speaker Madigan's amendment to SB 1. Mr. Fahner believes that even more money could be saved from its passage. Doug Whitley, President of the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce, also testified on behalf of SB 1 with nothing new to offer.

Other testimonies came from the Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability and the Office of the Auditor General. Jerry Stermer, Director of the Governor's Office of Management and Budget let the Committee know that their office was available 24/7 to make the pension deadline. The Governor himself failed to show at anytime during the 4.5+ hours of the hearing just as he failed to show during the final days of the legislative session.

Representative Lou Lang suggested that the Committee take a serious look at his pension bill which he introduced in February (HB 1251). Because Lang did not go through leadership, he admitted that his bill was dead on arrival before it even reached the House Pension and Personnel Committee. While Representative Mike Fortner was not in attendance, his pension bill was also mentioned (HB 2365) as a means to offer sensible solutions.

The We Are One Coalition provided testimony to the point of bringing a national negotiator from AFSCME to the table. Their focus is still on SB 2404. Again, nothing new to offer the Committee.

By the end of the day, no new ideas were heard from the rank and file testifiers even though the hearing was supposed to provide new approaches, methods, and considerations. It was still a battle between SB 1 and SB 2404. Let us hope that we all hear something different, something new at the next hearing scheduled for July 3 in Chicago at 9:00 a.m. The intent of the Conference Committee is a new agreed upon solution. Committee Co-chair Senator Raoul admits this will take time.

The Center for Tax and Budget Accountability will be addressing the Committee on July 3rd.