

# CHICAGO TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 25



## NEWS»

### NEW BILLS THREATEN COUNTY EMPLOYEES

#### Proposed Legislation Will Eliminate Vital County Services

Two bills passed out of an Illinois House Committee on Wednesday will blow a \$400 million hole in the Cook County budget, decimating services to residents, if signed into law.

House Bill 4624 will repeal last year's one percent increase of the Cook County sales tax. If the bill passes both chambers in Springfield over the next three weeks, the county will be forced to carve into public services to make up for the lost revenue. Corrections facilities, county courts, detention centers and social service industries will all face deep eliminations.

House Bill 4625 will also give the Cook County Board of Commissioners an easier shot at overriding a veto to guarantee the tax increase rollback. The bill will reduce the four-fifths majority now needed to a weaker three-fifths requirement. The 17 commissioners' attempt earlier this year to repeal the increase failed when they couldn't override Board President Todd Stroger's veto.

"House Bills 4624 and 4625 are cynical attempts by the state legislature to circumvent what has been the will of the people for decades," said Michael Ciaccio, Teamsters Joint Council 25 Political Director. "The County Board's four-fifths requirement has been in place since the 1870s and has never before been challenged on this level. Representatives who want to dissolve this majority now will be destroying services along with it."

According to Cook County officials, a rollback of the tax increase will impose such a significant strain on the budget that public employee positions will inevitably be eliminated. Currently, Teamsters Locals 714 and 726 collectively represent more than 7,000 workers in the county's most indispensable public service industries.

"The Illinois legislature will grossly overstep its authority if it votes to roll back the sales tax or weaken the County Board majority," said Ciaccio, who testified before the committee in opposition to both bills on behalf of the Teamsters. "The General Assembly will be taking county matters into its own hands."

Both House Bill 4624 and 4625 passed out of committee 5-1, with Rep. Patrick Verschoore (D-Rock Island), the committee's chairman, as the lone dissenter.

"Should representatives in Decatur or Knox County really be determining legislation for Cook County residents?" said Bill Logan, Local 726 Assistant Trustee. "By eliminating our taxes and thusly cutting our services, legislators in Springfield will forever jeopardize home-rule authority in Cook County."

# CHICAGO TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 25



## NEWS»

Earlier this year, a bill similar to House Bill 4625 passed the state Senate before being held up in the House. Senate Bill 1868 would have reduced the County Board vote requirement, with an effective date of January 1, 2011, had it not been stalled in the House Committee on Rules. The new bill, if passed by the General Assembly, will take immediate effect.

The House and Senate will have the chance to act on these and other issues when the General Assembly reconvenes next week for its fall veto session. It will adjourn on October 30.

Joint Council 25 encourages all Teamster members and union supporters to contact their state Senators and Representatives and urge them to oppose House Bills 4624 and 4625.