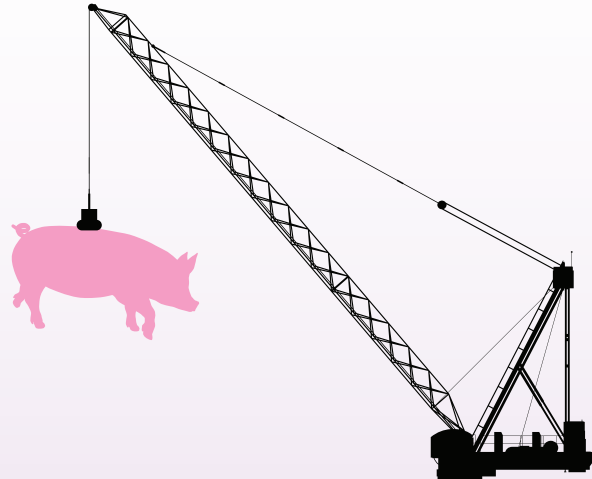


If You Build It, Debt Will Come

A Closer Look at the Illinois Capital Spending Spree



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Prepared by Nicole Kurokawa

Introduction

Illinois is in dire financial shape, but that hasn't stopped politicians from spending with vigor.

In February 2010, the Illinois Policy Institute released the *2010 Illinois Piglet Book* in conjunction with Citizens Against Government Waste, highlighting over \$350 million in wasteful operational spending.

This report provides a follow up to the *2010 Illinois Piglet Book* by offering a closer look at Illinois's capital spending plan. On July 13, 2009, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signed into law legislation nicknamed "Illinois Jobs Now!," which gave lawmakers \$31 billion to dole out to pet projects, delaying much-needed spending restraint reforms while enabling the government's profligate spending habits.

Highlighting spending decisions that were made in 2009 is critical because, as this report details, even during times of budget crises lawmakers are far from frugal. They should, in short, cut up their taxpayer funded credit card.

Illinois faced an \$11.6 billion combined budget shortfall in 2009, yet the legislature managed to pass a \$31 billion capital bill that relies on borrowing, higher taxes, increased fees, and expanded gambling. Just when the state's focus should have been on reducing costs, new liabilities were created. The political leaders that passed and signed the 2009 capital bill are the same individuals who have failed to balance the 2010 general budget. Because the politicians in charge refused to streamline and prioritize, Illinois residents will likely face an even higher budget deficit next year.

These chronic deficits and mounting debt have led to a series of declines in the state's credit rating. According to the Illinois Comptroller in an August 2010 report, "Since December 2008, the state's general obligation bonds have been downgraded four times by Fitch, twice by S&P and three times by Moody's." To top it off, "Illinois also has a negative outlook—meaning the possibility for further downgrades persist—with two of the three agencies as they remain concerned by the state's fiscal position."¹ In effect, the debt the state takes on in the future will be charged higher interest rates commensurate with a "higher risk." The Pew Center on the States has pronounced the Illinois budget "unsustainable," noting in a November 2009 report that the state has run deficits every year since the 2001 recession.²

Political Handouts

The capital spending bill demonstrates how political clout can turn into cold, hard cash, often at the expense of the greater good. For example, Senate President John Cullerton's (D-6) district and nearby areas have done very well by him, despite occupying the wealthy Chicago neighborhoods of Lakeview, Old Town, and Lincoln Park—where average home prices in 2008 topped \$600,000.³ Earmarked projects include:

- \$2,300,000 for The Old Town School of Folk Music, which included \$2 million for general infrastructure⁴ and \$300,000 for planning and design for an expansion;⁵
- \$1,600,000 for capital improvements at the Lincoln Park Zoo;⁶
- \$1,000,000 for The Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum;⁷
- \$300,000 for The Lincoln Park Conservancy Center which included \$200,000 for the repair, rehabilitation, and restoration to Caldwell Lily Pool, North Pond and the Diversey Building⁸ and \$100,000 for construction of a North Pond Rustic Pavilion;⁹

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- \$100,000 for The Old Town Merchants and Residents Association¹⁰\$50,000 for the Chicago Park District for infrastructure for Lincoln Park; and¹¹
- \$25,000 for The Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association.¹²

Several other nonprofits in Sen. Cullen's district received added funds. These programs and projects may or may not have merit, but they all received the funding on a favored and non-competitive basis. This money comes from the wallets of all of today's Illinoisans or from our children's prosperity. If folk music schools are a local priority, residents can choose to support these projects voluntarily or they can use local government money.

Funding: Loans, Taxes, and Fees

To fund the capital bill, the state will pay \$13 billion, mostly through the sale of 20-year bonds, or in layman's terms, "loans." Additional revenue will be raised through tax and fee increases:

- \$322 million will come from various fee increases for Secretary of State services, including increasing certificate of title fees from \$65 to \$95; increasing transfer of registration fees from \$15 to \$25; increasing passenger and truck B registration fees from \$79 to \$99; increasing drivers' license fees by \$20; and a doubling of the fines for overweight trucks.
- \$300 million will be raised from video gaming terminals, once fully implemented.
- \$162 million will be raised through "tax revenue enhancements," also known as "tax hikes," through a higher sales tax on candy; a higher sales tax on sweetened tea, coffee, grooming and hygiene products; and a higher volume tax on wine, spirits and certain beer products.

The rest of the bill will be funded through a combination of federal and local funds.¹³ However, an August 2010 report from the Illinois Comptroller indicates how tenuous the capital bill's funding mechanisms are proving to be: "It is apparent that there is uncertainty concerning how much revenue actually will be generated by this package... The performance of revenues in the first year has fallen below original projections."¹⁴ Taxpayers have good reason to be worried that they'll be on the hook for even more bailouts in the future.

Government Spending Does Not Equal Jobs

The capital spending bill is ultimately flawed because it rests on an erroneous premise. At the time, Governor Quinn argued that his plan was needed because "Illinois has not had a jobs plan in a decade."¹⁵ But Illinois does not need a government-centric "jobs plan"—the type of plan which typically shows little to no real impact. Indeed, Illinois had lower employment levels in June 2010 than in June 2009, even after the state received a \$4.5 billion dollar infusion of federal "stimulus" cash to pay for a variety of government pet projects.

Illinois Statewide Employment Totals (total nonfarm, seasonally adjusted)

July 2009: 5,624,000

July 2010: 5,600,000

Job Loss: 24,000

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics¹⁶

Total Federal "Stimulus" Funds Received from 2/17/2009 through 6/30/2010

\$4,454,800,000

Source: Recovery.gov¹⁷

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Illinois needs sustained economic growth, which requires a business-friendly environment. When there are businesses, there are jobs, and with more companies and more families, there is a broader tax base that can pay lower rates. In order to attract investment, the state must enact business-friendly policies and allow businesses to compete on a level playing field. It should not favor certain providers or industries by doling out subsidies while kneecapping others with higher taxes and burdensome regulations.

While Illinois does need capital improvements, this report shows much of the 2009 capital bill is focused on earmarks and special favors. Further, when the state is essentially insolvent, it does not make sense to immediately re-pave the driveway or paint the siding. Those repairs and capital improvements must be delayed until the basic operating budget is back in balance.

If Illinois wants to be a job-creation leader, the state should pass policies that would encourage economic expansion. For example, passing HB 5802 would create the Illinois Enterprise Commission, which would identify laws and regulations that hamper job creation in Illinois. The Illinois General Assembly would then take an up-or-down vote on recommendations to repeal or ameliorate barriers to business. Doing away with job-killing regulations would allow businesses to flourish and hire more workers, thereby augmenting state revenue without a destructive tax hike. For more ideas on how to balance Illinois's broken budget and turn the state's economy around, visit www.IllinoisTurnaround.com.

Programs

Flight of Fancy

At a time when the state is late paying its Medicaid bills, millions of dollars will literally be going to the birds. The following programs are flying away with money:

- \$3,291,528 for attracting waterfowl and improving public migratory waterfowl areas;¹⁸
- \$1,378,412 for the conservation of pheasants;¹⁹
- \$244,000 for the statewide North American Waterfowl Management Plan;²⁰ and
- \$144,000 for statewide migratory waterfowl restoration.²¹



More Critters

Birds aren't the only creatures scampering away with Illinoisans' tax dollars. In a move sure to make Governor Quinn more popular in the forest than Snow White, several other species in Illinois are also benefitting from the generosity of taxpayers:

- \$348,000 to replace/upgrade electrical service at the Jake Wolf memorial fish hatchery;²²
- \$337,020 for conservation of furbearing mammals;²³
- \$75,000 for the Bond County Humane Society for capital improvements for the animal shelter;²⁴ and
- \$44,584 to replace the dump and fish cleaning station at Forbes State Park.²⁵

At the Zoo

Illinois isn't biased in favor of wild animals; zoos are also deemed a crucial investment. The state is giving out the following money to animals in captivity:

- \$15.6 million for capital improvements to the Chicago Zoological Society,²⁶ which had a fund balance of \$134,870,213 on December 31, 2008;²⁷
- \$1.6 million for capital improvements to the Lincoln Park Zoo,²⁸ which had a fund balance of \$41,758,369 as of March 31, 2008;²⁹
- \$1.3 million for infrastructure improvements at the Brookfield Zoo through the Chicago Zoological Society;³⁰
- \$150,000 for the Chicago Zoological Society for acquisition and construction of new facilities and attractions at Brookfield Zoo;³¹
- \$100,000 for renovations to the Dolphinarium at the Brookfield Zoo;³² and
- \$25,000 for renovations at the Brookfield Zoo.³³

This Land Is Your Land... This Land Is My Land

The capital bill allocates \$754,574,795 for land acquisitions by various cities and organizations—or for specified purposes. The state has finite land available for sale, so for every acre purchased with taxpayer money, less land is available for others to buy, which can drive up the prices.

Through the Illinois Jobs Now! program, the state is giving out the following amounts to purchase land or fund facility building renovations and/or acquisitions:

- \$500 million for grants to counties, municipal and road districts;³⁴
- \$126,943,523 for public parks and open spaces;³⁵
- \$27,281,481 for public outdoor recreation purposes;³⁶
- \$26,175,859 for public bike paths;³⁷
- \$23,792,069 for preservation and stewardship of natural areas;³⁸
- \$10,077,064 for capital facilities;³⁹
- \$4,923,641 for boat access area development grants;⁴⁰
- \$3,801,572 for the Partners for Conservation program;⁴¹
- \$2,629,428 for planning a medium security facility;⁴²
- \$2,476,501 for local government with projects;⁴³
- \$850,000 to the Hispanic American Construction Industry Association for land purchase and renovations;⁴⁴
- \$842,605 for Horseshoe Lake;⁴⁵
- \$720,000 for Arden Shore Child and Family Services;⁴⁶
- \$600,000 to the Oswego Park District;⁴⁷
- \$525,158 for snowmobile trails;⁴⁸
- \$500,000 to the Forest Preserve District of DuPage;⁴⁹
- \$500,000 for the Chicago Area Project;⁵⁰
- \$500,000 to the DuPage Children's Museum for costs associated with a building purchase;⁵¹
- \$500,000 for Diversified Behavioral Comprehensive Care for purchase of property and renovations to the buildings purchased;⁵²
- \$450,000 to the Brighton Park Neighborhood Council for acquisition of land and construction of a community center;⁵³
- \$450,000 to the Austin People's Action Center for purchase and renovation of foreclosed properties for low-income housing and the development and construction of a Women's Wellness Center;⁵⁴
- \$450,000 to the Resource Center for Westside Communities for purchase and renovation of foreclosed properties for low-income housing;⁵⁵
- \$445,000 for the Institute for Positive Living for purchase and renovation of a building located at 5859 South State St. in Chicago;⁵⁶
- \$400,000 to the Edward G. Irvin Foundation;⁵⁷
- \$400,000 to Outreach Ministries for costs associated with the purchase of a new facility and repair;⁵⁸



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- \$315,000 to the city of Carlyle;⁵⁹
- \$310,000 to the city of Belvidere;⁶⁰
- \$310,000 to the DuPage County Area Project;⁶¹
- \$300,000 for the city of Danville for land acquisition for the Southgate Industrial Park;⁶²
- \$300,000 to the Plano Child Development Center for purchase and or rehabilitation of a building to expand the “Eye Can Learn” program;⁶³
- \$300,000 to Calumet Township;⁶⁴
- \$300,000 to the city of Chicago;⁶⁵
- \$275,000 to the Rockford Park District for all costs associated purchase and construction at Sportscore II;⁶⁶
- \$275,000 to the Forest Preservation District of Kane County;⁶⁷
- \$250,000 to the Miracle Center;⁶⁸
- \$244,604 for the Babe Woodyard state natural area;⁶⁹
- \$320,000 to WINGS;⁷⁰
- \$200,000 to Black on Black Love;⁷¹
- \$200,000 to the Plainfield Public Library for land purchase;⁷²
- \$200,000 to the Shorewood Public Library District;⁷³
- \$191,311 for the Homewood Railroad Station;⁷⁴
- \$189,979 to Cahokia Mounds Historic Site - St. Clair County to purchase private land within site boundary;⁷⁵
- \$175,000 to the Black United Council;⁷⁶
- \$150,000 to Sterling for costs associated with purchase of a building for environmental remediation;⁷⁷
- \$150,000 to the Chicago Zoological Society;⁷⁸
- \$150,000 to the Hampshire Park District;⁷⁹
- \$150,000 to the Blue Island Park District;⁸⁰
- \$150,000 to the Plainfield American Legion;⁸¹
- \$150,000 to the city of Wheaton;⁸²
- \$120,000 to the Department of Natural Resources for purchase of property near Grant’s home and the Grant Washburne Facility;⁸³
- \$100,000 to Rome Township for all costs associated with purchase of a building of construction of a new facility for the Township Building;⁸⁴
- \$100,000 for the Chatham Avalon Park Community Council;⁸⁵
- \$100,000 to the Illinois Advocacy Group;⁸⁶
- \$100,000 to the city of Mascoutah;⁸⁷
- \$100,000 to the Rockford Park District for land acquisition;⁸⁸
- \$100,000 to the Illinois Channel Organization for acquisition of a facility;⁸⁹
- \$100,000 to the Argenta-Oreana Fire Protection District for all costs associated with the purchase and/or renovation of a building for a fire station;⁹⁰
- \$100,000 to Kendall County for land purchase;⁹¹
- \$100,000 to Batavia Park for land purchases;⁹²

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- \$100,000 to the Geneva Park District;⁹³
- \$100,000 to the St. Charles Park District;⁹⁴
- \$100,000 to the Dundee Park District;⁹⁵
- \$100,000 to St. Peter for purchase and/or construction of a new community building;⁹⁶
- \$100,000 to St. Jacob for purchase and/or construction of a new public works building;⁹⁷
- \$50,000 to DuPage County PADS (Public Action to Deliver Shelter) for all costs associated with land acquisition to increase agency space;⁹⁸
- \$85,000 to the village of Pontoon Beach;⁹⁹
- \$75,000 to the RSP&E Fire Protection District;¹⁰⁰
- \$75,000 to the Family Friendly Community Development Corporation for land purchase;¹⁰¹
- \$67,000 to the city of Galena for Gateway Park land acquisition;¹⁰²
- \$60,000 to the Kenwood Oakland Community Organization;¹⁰³
- \$60,000 to Aviston for purchase of and/or construction of new maintenance building;¹⁰⁴
- \$50,000 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Will and Grundy Counties for purchase and renovation of new administration center;¹⁰⁵
- \$50,000 to the Access Community Health Network;¹⁰⁶
- \$50,000 to Zion City of Miracles for acquisition and renovation of a facility;¹⁰⁷
- \$50,000 to New Lenox for purchase and development of a historic site;¹⁰⁸
- \$35,000 to Glen Carbon for purchase, construction, and development of parks and walking trails;¹⁰⁹
- \$25,000 to the Blandinsville Senior Citizens Organization;¹¹⁰
- \$25,000 to Edinburg for purchase and renovation of a police department;¹¹¹
- \$25,000 to Hancock McDonough ROE 26 for costs associated with a building purchase for a co-op;¹¹²
- \$23,000 to FAYCO Enterprises for purchase of lot for community living building;¹¹³
- \$10,000 for the Villa Park Public Library for land purchase;¹¹⁴ and
- \$10,000 to the Anixter Center for costs associated with the purchase of a building.¹¹⁵

In addition to those specific allocations, the state is also spending \$46,743,496 for “acquisition, financing, planning, development, and construction of capital facilities including buildings, structures, durable equipment, and land as authorized by subsection (l), Section 3 of GO Bond Act or grants to State agencies for such purposes,”¹¹⁶ and an additional \$208,908,598 for “grants and loans to local governments for planning, engineering, acquisition, construction, and improvement of public infrastructure, and other purposes authorized in subsection (a), Section 4 of BIBF Act, and grants to State agencies for such purposes.”¹¹⁷

It's Not Easy Being Green

In the name of saving the environment, the state is spending \$15 million for renewable fuels¹¹⁸ and \$20 million for a statewide renewable fuels development program.¹¹⁹ The government should not subsidize any industries, because doing so gives those favored groups an unfair advantage in the marketplace and discourages future investment from other companies who are unable to compete without the use of taxpayer dollars.

Park It

Another investment that the state considers an integral part of getting Illinois's economy back on its feet is...parks. In the capital bill, the state's debt will be growing in the following parks:

- \$550,000 for shoreline restoration at the Chicago Botanic Garden,¹²⁰ which had a fund balance of \$137,489,239 as of December 31, 2007;¹²¹
- \$250,000 for the Chicago Park District for construction and renovation at Eden's Place Nature Center;¹²²
- \$200,000 for repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of Caldwell Lily Pool, North Pond, and the Diversey Building;¹²³
- \$100,000 for the Lincoln Park Conservancy to construct a North Pond Rustic Pavilion;¹²⁴
- \$100,000 for the Anderson Japanese Gardens for all costs associated with construction of a new pavilion;¹²⁵ and
- \$40,000 for general infrastructure at the Africa Exhibit in Glen Oak Park at the Peoria Park District.¹²⁶



Grab a Snorkel

Another reason the state's budget is underwater is the funding going to pool facilities. The following pools and aquatic centers are receiving money:

- \$585,000 to the Cicero Aquatic Center;¹²⁷
- \$300,000 to McCormick YMCA of Metro Chicago for an aquatic center;¹²⁸
- \$300,000 to YMCA of Metro Chicago for the McCormick Tribune YMCA pool;¹²⁹
- \$150,000 to YMCA of Metro Chicago for a pool and gym at South Chicago YMCA;¹³⁰
- \$75,000 to Taylorville for the Manners Park Pool;¹³¹
- \$63,279 to Pere Marquette State Park for lodge pool dehumidifier;¹³²
- \$60,000 to YMCA of Metro Chicago for pool at Niles Learning Tower;¹³³
- \$50,000 to Berwyn for the Pavak Pool;¹³⁴
- \$50,000 to Chicago Park District for the pool building at River Park;¹³⁵
- \$20,000 to Salem Area Aquatics Foundation for indoor center and pool;¹³⁶ and
- \$20,000 to Villa Park for the Jefferson and Lufkin swimming pools.¹³⁷

Community Service

Illinois is giving out grants to several community organizations. Although these organizations may be well-intentioned, the grants fall far down the priority list when the state cannot pay for basic operating expenses on a timely basis. They include:

- \$1.2 million for theater renovations and infrastructure for the Muntu Dance Theater;¹³⁸
- \$500,000 for development and construction of the Chicago Baseball Museum and Stadium;¹³⁹
- \$200,000 for the Free and Accepted Masons of Springfield for restoration of the Central Lodge #3 facility;¹⁴⁰

- \$150,000 for the Troy Baseball League to install lighting and other capital;¹⁴¹ and
- \$100,000 to Diamond in the Ruff Children's Society¹⁴² —which was founded by Ms. Deveda Francois,¹⁴³ who works for the state's Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (which, not coincidentally, gave the organization its grant).¹⁴⁴

Leaving on a Jet Plane

Spending has really taken off for airports, with the state's flight infrastructure receiving more than a few suitcases full of cash. In the capital bill, despite a crippled state budget, airports are flying away with \$844,490,876 of taxpayers' money to be spent on the following things:

- \$747,035,190 for statewide financial assistance to airports (federal and local share);¹⁴⁵
- \$100 million to South Suburban Airport;¹⁴⁶
- \$14,800,686 to Will County for a third Chicago airport;¹⁴⁷
- \$10.5 million for land acquisition for South Suburban Airport;¹⁴⁸
- \$5 million for St. Clair County for Metrolink Rail to Mid-America Airport;¹⁴⁹
- \$80,000 to the Williamson County Airport Authority;¹⁵⁰ and
- \$75,000 to the Waukegan Regional Airport.¹⁵¹



2010 Piglet Book Recipients

Some recipients of state largesse listed in the Illinois Policy Institute's *2010 Piglet Book*, which focused on general fund spending, are receiving additional funds from the state of Illinois in the capital bill. A few examples are as follows:

- \$150 million for the state's share of Intercity Rail Passenger Service (Amtrak),¹⁵² and \$250,000 specifically for the Village of Glenview to develop and construct an Amtrak station;¹⁵³
- \$38,140,000 to Lincoln's Challenge for capital improvements;¹⁵⁴
- \$6.8 million for the theater, specifically:
- \$5.1 million to the Black Ensemble Theater;¹⁵⁵
- \$500,000 to the Goodman Theatre for capital improvements;¹⁵⁶
- \$200,000 to the Regal Theater for parking garage;¹⁵⁷
- \$200,000 to the Champaign Park District for the Virginia Theatre;¹⁵⁸
- \$175,000 to Normal for the Connie Link Ampitheater;¹⁵⁹
- \$150,000 to the city of Joliet for the Rialto Square Theater;¹⁶⁰
- \$100,000 to the Apple Tree Theater;¹⁶¹
- \$100,000 to the Paramount Arts Center;¹⁶²
- \$75,000 to the St. Elmo Historical Society;¹⁶³
- \$60,000 to the Tinley Park Park District for community theatre;¹⁶⁴
- \$50,000 to Edwardsville for Wildey Theater renovation;¹⁶⁵

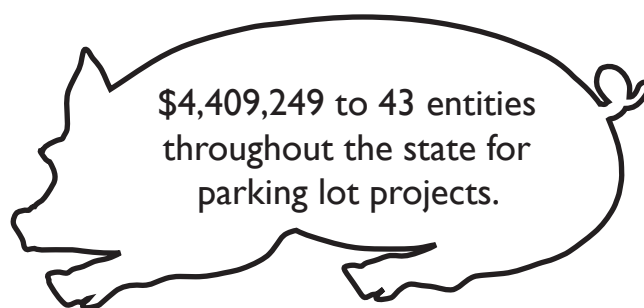
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- \$40,000 to the Salem Community Theatre and Cultural Center;¹⁶⁶
- \$25,000 to the Illinois Theater for infrastructure;¹⁶⁷ and
- \$25,000 to North Riverside for community theater lighting.¹⁶⁸
- \$6,260,000 for a building addition and residence hall renovation, \$3.6 million for “A” wing laboratory remodeling,¹⁶⁹ \$150,000 for residence halls,¹⁷⁰ and \$108,843 for space for delivery of a teacher training and development and student enrichment program at the Illinois Math and Science Academy;¹⁷¹
- \$4,776,051 to Lincoln-related projects, including:
- \$2,645,514 for the Lincoln Presidential Library for the library and museum;¹⁷²
- \$1 million for restoration of the Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices to purchase and restore the Tinley Shop,¹⁷³ and \$25,200 for emergency roof repairs;¹⁷⁴
- \$700,000 for renovations to the interior of Lincoln’s Tomb;¹⁷⁵
- \$280,000 for the Lincoln Log Cabin to replace sewer system;¹⁷⁶
- \$121,000 for Lincoln’s Tomb/Vietnam Memorial for rehabilitating the site and providing an irrigation system;¹⁷⁷ and
- \$4,337 for the Lincoln Presidential Library.¹⁷⁸
- \$1,099,000 for Easter Seals throughout the state;¹⁷⁹
- \$530,000 to the City of Pontiac for infrastructure improvements related to the area of tourism;¹⁸⁰
- \$500,000 to AIDS Foundation of Chicago for facility improvements;¹⁸¹ and
- \$150,000 to the AIDSCare Veterans Home for general infrastructure improvements.¹⁸²

“Lots” of Money

Illinois taxpayers are paying \$4,409,249 for parking lots throughout the state, as follows:

- \$400,000 to Buffalo Grove;¹⁸³
- \$238,800 for statewide land and parking lots;¹⁸⁴
- \$250,000 to Westchester;¹⁸⁵
- \$200,000 to Libertyville;¹⁸⁶
- \$200,000 to the Dundee Park District;¹⁸⁷
- \$200,000 to the Springfield YMCA;¹⁸⁸
- \$200,000 to the Oswego Public Library;¹⁸⁹
- \$170,000 to the Winfield Park District;¹⁹⁰
- \$165,000 to Blackburn College;¹⁹¹
- \$160,000 to Aurora;¹⁹²
- \$150,000 to Palos Heights;¹⁹³
- \$133,664 to the Elgin Mental Health Center;¹⁹⁴
- \$125,000 to Forest Park;¹⁹⁵
- \$125,000 to the Buffalo Grove Park District;¹⁹⁶
- \$125,000 to Maria High School;¹⁹⁷



- \$106,500 to the Irwin Park Association;¹⁹⁸
- \$100,000 to Lincoln;¹⁹⁹
- \$100,000 to LaGrange Park;²⁰⁰
- \$100,000 to Palos Heights;²⁰¹
- \$100,000 to Fenton Community High School District #100;²⁰²
- \$97,000 to Special Education Services for Lake Shore Academy;²⁰³
- \$92,000 to Palatine;²⁰⁴
- \$80,000 to the Richmond Fire Protection District;²⁰⁵
- \$75,000 to the Rolling Meadows Park District;²⁰⁶
- \$70,000 to McNabb;²⁰⁷
- \$70,000 to the KLEO Community Family Life Center;²⁰⁸
- \$65,000 to Granite City;²⁰⁹
- \$60,000 to Project OZ;²¹⁰
- \$50,000 to the Western DuPage Special Recreation Association;²¹¹
- \$50,000 to the Wooddale Public Library;²¹²
- \$50,000 to DuPage Township;²¹³
- \$40,000 to Community Consolidated School District 99;²¹⁴
- \$40,000 to the West Suburban Fire Protection District;²¹⁵
- \$35,500 to the Markham Park District;²¹⁶
- \$35,000 to Southwest Community Services;²¹⁷
- \$30,000 to Easter Seals of DuPage- Fox Valley;²¹⁸
- \$28,785 to the Manteno Veterans Home;²¹⁹
- \$27,000 to Berlin;²²⁰
- \$25,000 to Serenity House;²²¹
- \$10,000 to VFW Post;²²²
- \$10,000 to American Legion Post 1205;²²³
- \$10,000 to VFW Addison Post;²²⁴ and
- \$10,000 to Addison Township.²²⁵

Conclusion

Governor Quinn's capital bill digs Illinois into a \$31 billion fiscal hole at a time the state can ill afford to take on additional debt. Far from being an investment in the state's future, the bill's expenditures are little more than a series of projects that at best should be postponed; at worst, they are simply handouts and earmarks. The state cannot afford to keep spending money it does not have—whether on regular appropriations or capital bills. Eventually, the bills will come due, and taxpayers will have to send more of their hard-earned money to government coffers.

If legislators are truly concerned with creating and retaining jobs in Illinois, they will take steps to create a business-friendly environment to attract corporations and encourage entrepreneurs. This can be achieved through low taxes, limited regulations, and equal treatment for enterprises and cities alike—not favoring certain entities through subsidies. This is the only way to create sustainable economic growth in Illinois.

Endnotes

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