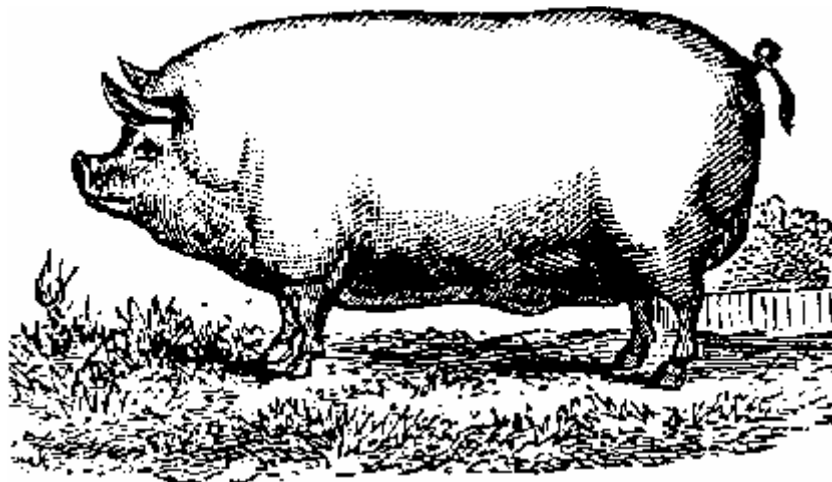


**The Illinois Policy Institute
and
Citizens Against Government Waste**



**2008 ILLINOIS
PIGLET BOOK**

“The Book Springfield Doesn’t Want You to Read”

THE ILLINOIS POLICY INSTITUTE

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CITIZENS AGAINST GOVERNMENT WASTE

Citizens Against Government Waste (CAGW) is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to educating the American public about waste, mismanagement, and inefficiency in the federal government.

CAGW was founded in 1984 by J. Peter Grace and nationally-syndicated columnist Jack Anderson to build support for implementation of the Grace Commission recommendations and other waste-cutting proposals. Since its inception, CAGW has been at the forefront of the fight for efficiency, economy, and accountability in government.

CAGW has 1.2 million members and supporters nationwide. Since 1986, CAGW and its members have helped save taxpayers \$944 billion. CAGW publishes a quarterly newsletter, *Government Waste Watch*, and produces special reports, monographs, and television documentaries examining government waste and what citizens can do to stop it.

CAGW is classified as a Section 501(c)(3) organization under the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 and is recognized as a publicly-supported organization described in Section 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(A)(vi) of the code. Individuals, corporations, companies, associations, and foundations are eligible to support the work of CAGW through tax-deductible gifts.

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Executive Summary

Illinois is in a financial nightmare. Politicians warn of doomsday scenarios where vital services will be cut unless more money is pumped into state coffers. Tax and fee increases and bond financing are spun as the only viable ways to solve this cash crunch – but this is not the truth. The state’s revenues are higher than ever. Illinois comptroller general Daniel Hynes informed the General Assembly in his February 2008 “Fiscal State of the State Report” that general funds revenues from fiscal year 2003 through fiscal year 2007 increased nearly \$5.5 billion, or 5.5 percent per year, driven by a 24 percent growth in income and sales taxes. Despite this influx, expenditures have increased at a breakneck pace. Springfield is addicted to spending taxpayer dollars, and the cycle must be broken.

The government has overstepped its boundaries in a number of areas, funding projects and enterprises that are not vital to the state’s well-being. The state’s favor factory needs to be shut down. Using taxpayer money to buy the affection of a select few hurts all Illinoisans and undermines the democratic process. Lawmakers need to refocus on essential issues and fund priorities, not special interests.

According to the comptroller general, fiscal year 2007 appropriations totaled \$58.4 billion, while fiscal year 2008 appropriations totaled \$59.5 billion. The 2008 *Illinois Piglet Book* identifies more than \$686 million in wasteful spending that can be trimmed from the state’s budget. Before lawmakers propose raising taxes or fees by one single cent, the 2009 budget must be stripped of pork-barrel spending projects that do not serve the general public welfare.

Some egregious lowlights from the 2008 budget include:

- \$4 million for a Ford Technical Training Center in Chicago Heights
- \$1 million for the Illinois film office in Chicago
- \$920,000 for the Chicago Aerospace Education Initiative
- \$550,000 for the conservation of pheasants
- \$500,000 to administer the tanning facility permit act
- \$156,000 to Southern Illinois University to refurbish cabins at the “Touch of Nature Environmental Center” at Southern Illinois University - Carbondale
- \$40,000 for the Springfield Figure Skating Club
- \$35,000 for the Prairie Aviation Museum for a display gallery in Bloomington

The answer to Illinois’ fiscal woes lies not in siphoning more money from taxpayers’ wallets, but in greater transparency and accountability by the state’s elected officials. Legislators owe it to Illinois citizens to spend each dollar carefully. If they cannot justify their spending, then they shouldn’t take the money in the first place.

Introduction

There is no doubt that the state of Illinois needs to establish fiscal discipline. Beset by personal and partisan fights, policymakers in Springfield have been unable to come up with long-term solutions to Illinois' economic woes – problems that worsen the longer they are ignored. The state pleads pauper, insisting it lacks the resources to fulfill its core duties, yet the 2008 Illinois budget is full of examples of taxpayer resources spent on unnecessary projects. As George Bernard Shaw remarked, “the government that takes from Peter to pay Paul can always count on the support of Paul.” The favor factory that Springfield has established benefits politicians and their patrons at the expense of the average citizen. A serious wake-up call is needed to restore fiscal sanity and keep the government in line.

The *2008 Illinois Piglet Book* debunks the myth that Springfield is cash-strapped and has no choice but to either raise taxes or cut essential programs. With the depth and breadth of wasteful spending that is taking place, it is difficult for the state to fulfill its basic obligations to its citizens. Before the state asks for one more dollar from hardworking Illinois residents, underlying issues of waste, fraud, and abuse must be addressed.

Each day, citizens must make hard choices about what to spend their money on, foregoing the things they want for the things they need because of budgetary constraints. The state needs to adopt a similar commonsense approach to spending – it cannot continue to fund everything it wants today while passing the costs on to future generations. As the state government doles out grants and earmarks to local governments, an air of irresponsibility is passed on as well. With the promise of extra funds and bailouts by the state, localities have little incentive to spend their money wisely – hurting the very people they are meant to serve.

This study combs through the 2008 budget, identifying more than \$686 million in savings. After looking at the state of the economy, the \$13 billion state education budget is examined, followed by the \$23.9 billion health and human services budget. Environment and agriculture, the arts council, historic preservation, special industry preferences, and economic development are also dissected. The examples may be shocking, but they should also inspire a demand for change in Springfield's wasteful ways.

The State of the State

By several accounts, Illinois has a struggling economy. The American Legislative Exchange Council's “Rich States, Poor States” ranks Illinois number 42 (number 50 being the worst) on the economic outlook ladder, based on equal weighting of 16 variables: highest marginal personal income tax rate, highest marginal corporate income tax rate, progressivity of the personal income tax system, property tax burden, sales tax burden, tax burden from all remaining taxes, existence of an estate tax/inheritance tax, tax policy changes in 2005-06, debt service as share of tax revenue, public employees per 10,000 residents, quality of state legal system, state minimum wage, workers' compensation costs, right-to-work laws, tax/expenditure limit, and education freedom index.¹ Neighboring states fared much better – Wisconsin ranked number 30, Iowa ranked number 27, Indiana ranked number 12, and Missouri ranked number 17. Such a low ranking does not bode well for a state that hopes to remain competitive or attract business in the future.

In the same index, the state's economic performance ranks number 48, besting only Ohio (number 49) and Michigan (number 50).² This ranking, based upon three equally weighted variables – personal income per capita cumulative growth, absolute domestic migration cumulative, and non-farm payroll employment cumulative growth – are considered performance variables that are highly influenced by state policy, indicating that Illinois' policies to date have been nothing short of disastrous.

Each year the Tax Foundation analyzes state tax burdens. One index compares the cumulative effect of state and local taxes on citizens. In 2007, Illinois' state and local tax burden was 10.8 percent, just below the national average of 11.0 percent – earning a place as the twenty-second highest burden in the country.³ The Tax Foundation's "2008 State Business Tax Climate Index" ranks Illinois at number 28 nationally – slightly worse than its 2007 ranking of number 27.⁴ The index compares the states in five areas of taxation that impact business: corporate taxes, individual income taxes, sales taxes, unemployment insurance taxes, and property taxes. Illinois fares best in the individual income tax category, ranking number 12; unfortunately, it ranks number 40 in the property tax category and number 42 in the unemployment insurance category.

Such an unfriendly business climate does not bode well for Illinois residents. For example, as the state becomes less competitive and less attractive to businesses looking for a home base, it means people are less inclined to move to, or stay in, Illinois. United Van Lines' data shows that 58.4 percent of moves related to Illinois were outbound – placing the state near the bottom of a national cumulative migration index.⁵ Essentially, Illinois is hemorrhaging citizens; U.S. Census data from 1997-2006 shows Illinois lost 727,150 residents.⁶ As Sam Batkins of the National Taxpayers Union wrote, "After the 1950 Census Illinois had a 25-member Congressional delegation and 5.7 percent of the U.S. population. Today, the state can claim just 19 Congresspersons and 4.4 percent of the U.S. population... In the past five fiscal years, U.S. population growth has averaged 0.94 percent, while Illinois has crept along at 0.5 percent, or roughly half the national rate."⁷

Politicians may not be telling the truth on the budget; they claim Illinois is struggling financially. In fact, the state is collecting more money than ever before. The 2007 "Fiscal Survey of States," published by the National Association of State Budget Officers (NASBO) and the National Governors Association, examines states' enacted budgets, comparing revenues and expenditures from year to year. In one category, the report compares fiscal year 2007 tax collections with the projections used in adopting 2007 budgets. Illinois had far more revenue on hand than it originally anticipated for fiscal year 2007 – but strangely, this money never made it back to taxpayers. Rather, the state's "budget crisis" only worsened. Sales tax estimates were too high: \$7.295 billion estimated, with actual collections of \$7.136 billion, meant a discrepancy of -\$159 million. However, this was more than compensated for by collections of personal income taxes; these were estimated to be \$8.884 billion, with actual collections of \$9.408 billion – a windfall of \$524 million. Similarly, corporate income taxes provided additional funds, as revenues were estimated at \$1.711 billion and actual collections were \$1.75 billion – a surplus of \$39 million.⁸

Comparing tax collections in fiscal years 2006 and 2007 with enacted fiscal year 2008 in the NASBO report paints a similar picture of increasing revenue. Sales tax collections in 2006 were \$7.092 billion; in 2007, \$7.136 billion. Estimates for 2008 are \$7.372 billion. Personal income tax collections also increased; in 2006, \$8.635 billion was collected, and in 2007, \$9.408 billion. Estimates for 2008 are \$9.86 billion. Corporate income taxes, unsurprisingly, increased as well; in 2006, collections were \$1.428 billion, and in 2007 were \$1.75 billion. Estimates for 2008 are \$1.938 billion.⁹

By the state's own admission, fiscal year 2008 included appropriations of \$89,744,729,355.¹⁰ The U.S. Census bureau estimates that Illinois' population in 2007 was 12,852,548¹¹ – so in effect, the state spent \$6,982.64 per man, woman, and child. The state spends a staggering \$2,845.79 per second;¹² with a median family income in Illinois of \$63,121 in 2006 (the most recently available data),¹³ that much is spent by the state every 22.18 seconds. The average per capita income in Illinois in 2006 was \$26,514, an amount spent by the state every 9.32 seconds.

With more money than before, it appears that politicians' wish lists have just gotten longer. It is time to put an end to this shameful practice. The state needs to stick to the few things it has been tasked with in the state constitution and leave the rest to individuals and local governments. Springfield does not know how to spend tax dollars best; taxpayers do.

The ABCs of Waste: Education in Illinois

In fiscal year 2007, education appropriations for the state of Illinois totaled \$12.9 billion, or 22 percent of all appropriated funds. The state comptroller, Daniel W. Hynes, acknowledged that this figure is 5.1 percent higher than fiscal year 2006, while appropriations to the State Board of Education increased 5.6 percent.¹⁴ As the second largest appropriated function in the state behind health and human services, education is one of the state's premier obligations. Despite the vast resources the state pours into education, however, student performance has remained flat – prompting calls for more money to solve the problem. But there are questions about spending those funds properly.

According to the *Education Week* study “Quality Counts 2008,” Illinois' schools garner a grade of “C” (73.4), below the national average. Highlights, or rather, lowlights, include dismal rankings in categories such as K-12 achievement: D+ (69.1), school spending: D (63.4), and the teaching profession: D+ (68.1).¹⁵ State achievement levels on the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress tests are slightly below the national average for fourth and eighth grade math, and slightly above the national average for fourth and eighth grade reading. For the math tests, 36.3 percent of fourth graders were proficient, ranking the state number 34 nationally; 30.8 percent of eighth graders were proficient, ranking the state number 31. For the reading tests, 32.2 percent of fourth graders were proficient, ranking the state number 30 nationally; 29.8 percent of eighth graders were proficient, ranking the state number 29.¹⁶

Governor Blagojevich's flagship education program, “Helping Kids Learn,” was launched in 2006. The program was intended to revamp the state's educational system through five tenets: “A Good Place to Learn,” to fund school construction, district consolidation, and rural learning; “Strong Teachers and Administrators,” to improve educator quality and implement merit-based pay; “Quality Materials,” to improve textbooks and technology; “Enough Time to Learn,” to expand the Governor's “Preschool for All” plan and expand full-time kindergarten statewide; and “The Financial Resources to Get It Done,” increasing spending by \$686 per student while reducing administrative costs and demanding increased performance.¹⁷ In the fiscal year 2008 budget, the governor demanded another \$1.5 billion to achieve the goals of Helping Kids Learn¹⁸ – only a small portion of the \$10 billion he promised to funnel into the program over the next four years.¹⁹ It has yet to be seen whether the plan will succeed – but in spending \$10 billion of taxpayers' money, it is certain that the program will “affect” everyone in the state, even if they do not have any school-aged children.

A Computer in Every Pot!

One component of Helping Kids Learn – technology – was kicked off with a bang in fiscal year 2007 under the Technology Immersion Pilot Project. The Illinois State Board of Education crow's on its website, "In the first year of the Pilot Project more than 2200 students in seventeen Illinois schools were furnished with laptop or tablet PCs for use in the classroom as well as at home. Additionally, over 300 teachers and administrators received the same equipment to better facilitate the use of technology in the process of teaching and learning."²⁰ Program reviews as to the success of this project are still being collected – but that hasn't stopped ISBE from soliciting applications for laptop grants for the coming year. Anyone who has not received a laptop should feel free to apply; it looks like ISBS will not stop until every student has one.

3-D Education: The Way of the Future!

The state is providing \$2 million in fiscal year 2008 for the "Classroom Cubed" program -- a joint venture between education and business that benefits the Rock Island/Milan School District number 41.²¹ As the website explains, "*Classroom*³_{TM} (Classroom Cubed) 3D simulations, created by JTM Concepts, are used as teaching and learning tools to enrich the learning environment of classrooms in grades K-12. We define 3D as a three-dimensional, holographic style images in which the students are active participants in the learning experience and the action is completely controlled by the user/teacher."²² Simulations created to date include Making Cubes, Photosynthesis, Pollination, Symmetry, U.S. Currency, Green Plant Life Cycle, and Estimation. Simulations in progress include Leaf, Tree Layers, Plow, Eye, and Heart. In the meantime, the other 892 school districts around the state have to make do learning these concepts in boring 2-D. How last century...

The Classroom Cubed website kindly acknowledges Rep. Pat Verschoore (D-72nd District) and Speaker Michael Madigan (D-22nd District) for their help in securing this grant.

3... 2... 1... Blast Off to Wasteful Spending!

In fiscal year 2008, \$920,000 is being spent for "costs associated with the Chicago Aerospace Education Initiative."²³ The program seeks to prepare students for jobs in the twenty-first century that will require technical skill sets in math, science and engineering.²⁴ The company providing the product, Space Explorers, bills itself as a "space education corporation committed to bringing the excitement of space exploration into classrooms worldwide."²⁵ Space Explorers got a foot in the door in Chicago in 1997, when they hired Sandra Bast as Director of At-Risk Education. Space Explorers' website explains how "Ms. Bast worked within Illinois and the Chicago Public School System ... Today the Chicago Public School District is SEI's largest single district customer, and they utilize the SEI Portal program. Subsequently, Ms. Bast's minority-owned business, Bast Services, was awarded a three-year NASA summer education program in Chicago in 2002."²⁶ And people think that kind of favored contracting only happens in the Daley administration.

How About That Subsidy

The “Jobs for Illinois Grads” program, a 501(c)(3) non-profit state affiliate member of the national organization “Jobs for America's Graduates,” is receiving \$4 million in the 2008 state budget.²⁷ The program provides disadvantaged youth with the support, confidence and skills to improve their personal development and employability that will serve them in forging a successful future, and has helped over 20,000 students since its inception in 1996. Illinois taxpayers do not need to finance such a large grant when the group’s corporate sponsors include Archer Daniels Midland, Citizens Saving Foundation, Exelon, HSBC, Office Max, State Farm and Wachovia.²⁸

Perhaps their grant was influenced by the fact that the organization’s board of directors has five state elected officials – Rep. Brandon W. Phelps, (D-18th District); Sen. Donne E. Trotter, (D-17th District), who is also chairman of the Appropriations I Committee and vice-chair of the Appropriations II Committee; Rep. Angelo “Skip” Saviano, (R-77th District), Rep. Dan Reitz, (D-116th District); who is also chairman of the Revenue Committee; and Rep. John D’Amico, (D-15th District).²⁹

Using Your Tax Dollars...to Ask for More Tax Dollars

The Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board (IELRB) is receiving \$1,432,200 in fiscal year 2008.³⁰ The IELRB is the state agency that administers the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Act – legislation which established the right of educational employees to organize and bargain collectively. Teachers’ union negotiations with the state have historically demanded more pay and increased benefits – obviously, paid for by taxpayers, who just can’t win.

Pay Up or Else...

The state is providing \$1 million to the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority for all costs associated with bullying prevention.³¹ The likelihood that these funds were threatened or coerced from the legislature is quite low, fortunately, because Rep. Julie E. Hamos (D-18th District) serves on the leadership council of the Illinois Violence Prevention Authority.³²

“Starving Students” No More

Created in 2006, the Monetary Award Program Plus (MAP Plus) provides a maximum annual grant of \$500 to sophomores, juniors and seniors from families with incomes less than \$200,000 and attending Illinois higher education institutions. An estimated 73,000 students are eligible for first semester awards totaling \$18 million; to date, approximately 36,500 students have been paid a total of \$9 million.³³

The MAP Plus program complements the existing Monetary Award Program (MAP), which provides low-income Illinois students grants up to a statutory maximum of \$4,968. In fiscal year 2007, this program was increased by an additional \$34.4 million, which increased the average MAP award by approximately \$300, providing the largest increase in students’ awards since fiscal year 2003. In fiscal year 2008, Illinois taxpayers are shelling out \$381.1 million³⁴ to provide students with tuition grants. Estimates for fiscal years 2007 and 2008 have 44.8 percent of students receiving some sort of financial aid.³⁵

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Ironically, expanding student loan programs does not make college more affordable – in fact, it creates an inflationary effect, raising the prices for everyone as students are insulated from the costs. As Neal McCluskey of the Cato Institute explains, “Schools lobby hard for ‘student aid’ – because it’s the colleges and universities that actually pocket the money. As long as aid keeps ballooning, students can pay ever-escalating tuition and fees and Greedy U. can keep boosting salaries, building new facilities and making life cushier for faculty and staff.”³⁶

A Ph.D. in Pork

Illinois university projects are really teaching taxpayers an expensive lesson. A few stand out in particular:

- \$10,875,000 for a culinary arts center for City Colleges of Chicago/ Kennedy King.³⁷ This district is represented by Senator Mattie Hunter (D) and Representative Esther Golar (D).
- \$4,906,554 for construction of a day care center and \$4,805,809 for construction of a student financial outreach building at Chicago State University.³⁸ Chicago State had a tough year in 2007. The university’s president announced her resignation at the end of January following revelations of school funds used for personal expenses. This scandal was in addition to a questionable relationship with a student loan lender and the purchase of two copy machines from a university staffer’s side business for \$250,000.³⁹ According to Americans for Prosperity, “Since Elnora Daniel was appointed to her position as President of Chicago State University (CSU), campaign contributions to Senator Emil Jones from individuals associated with CSU, including Daniel, have been on the rise. Pork-barrel spending steered to CSU by Sen. Jones has also trended up. Over the same period (1999-2006) Sen. Emil Jones received nearly \$56,500 in campaign donations from CSU-affiliated persons, the Senator sponsored more than \$49.2 million in grants for Chicago State University.”⁴⁰
- \$500,000 for scholarships to forensic science students studying to perform DNA analysis for the Illinois State Police;⁴¹
- \$200,000 to Northeastern Illinois University for a “North Atlantic Slave Trade Study;”⁴²
- \$156,000 to Southern Illinois University to refurbish cabins at the “Touch of Nature Environmental Center;”⁴³ and
- \$300,000 for the Small Business Developmental Center at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale for the purpose of providing technical and financial assistance in the creation, development, and retention of small business in southern Illinois.⁴⁴

Paging Dr. Blagojevich...

In a constitutionally questionable end-run around the fiscal year 2008 budget ratified by the General Assembly, Governor Blagojevich remains committed to forcing his “Illinois Covered” plan down the throats of Illinois residents. Even though the plan was voted down by the state House 107-0,⁴⁵ the governor has not let a small matter like a legislative rejection get in his way. In a letter to Illinoisans on www.IllinoisCovered.com, the taxpayer-funded propaganda website designed to push his agenda, he wrote:

“On March 7th, I announced a plan to expand access to existing healthcare programs and create an affordable quality option for all men and women and small businesses in Illinois. Unfortunately, the Illinois General Assembly failed to act on expanding access to healthcare this session. In the face of that inaction, I am using my executive authority to expand healthcare to over 500,000 more Illinoisans.”⁴⁶

The program, which he bills as “a series of related programs designed to provide guaranteed, affordable access to quality health care for all Illinois residents,”⁴⁷ dramatically expands the scope of existing state health programs, raising enrollment limits far beyond the poverty line. With his proposal to pay for this expansion via a gross receipts tax scuttled by the General Assembly, it would appear that Illinois Covered is DOA – but the governor continues to push forward, undaunted.

Health care spending in Illinois already accounts for the largest portion of state’s budget; according to the state comptroller, “the Department of Healthcare and Family Services is the agency with the greatest amount of appropriations totaling \$16 billion. This is a 5.6 percent increase over fiscal year 2006 and is 27.5 percent of the total fiscal year 2007 budget...From a functional viewpoint, health and human services represent the single largest appropriated function, totaling \$23.9 billion, an increase of 5.7 percent over fiscal year 2006.”⁴⁸

By attempting an executive takeover of the state’s health care system, the governor is displaying a flagrant disregard for both the rule of law and the intelligence of Illinoisans. Taking away citizens’ rights to choose their own health care presumes that he knows what is best for consumers – and that they cannot be trusted to make such decisions for themselves. The premise is an insult. Unfortunately, once the state controls access to health care, all personal decisions that tangentially relate to health care, from fatty foods to smoking to exercise, also become the government’s business – ostensibly, to control costs. This is a dangerous path to go down, and one that should be avoided at all costs.

This Will Only Hurt for a Minute...

It goes without saying that the government does not always exercise good judgment when it comes to health care spending. This money would certainly be better utilized by retirees on their prescriptions or by mothers on their sick children than on the following programs:

- \$1,250,000 for the State Indoor Radon Abatement Program.⁴⁹ The state’s website says: “The Illinois Emergency Management Agency Radon program staff informs Illinois citizens about the risks associated with radon and how to reduce radon levels in their homes. The Agency also licenses and regulates the individuals who provide radon measurement and mitigation to the public.”⁵⁰ The state

doesn't appear to do anything except provide contact information for private companies and laboratories that test and fix radon in homes and businesses – essentially, providing these companies with taxpayer-funded marketing and information that can be found on the Internet and in the yellow pages.

- \$100,000 for the Bridget Hartigan Education and Awareness Campaign.⁵¹ The campaign – which is related to cancer – has no website. Notably, Ms. Hartigan was the daughter of the Hon. Neil Hartigan – who currently serves as chairman and CEO of the World Trade Center of Illinois and has formerly held the positions of Deputy Chicago Mayor, Illinois Attorney General, Illinois Lieutenant Governor, and Justice of the Appellate Court.⁵² Of course, many families of cancer victims would like to start foundations in their loved ones' names. But it is doubtful that the nonprofit organizations created by most of those families would get funding from the state.
- \$100,000 for the podiatric scholarship and residency act – helping podiatrists-in-training step ahead with their education expenses.⁵³ Why these future doctors cannot take out student loans like the rest of the world is a mystery.
- \$45,000 for the summer food inspection program, and \$75,000 for the safe bottled water program.⁵⁴

An Apple a Day

The state distributes numerous grants to various disease research centers and foundations each year. There is little evidence the legislators have the expertise to determine what causes or laboratories deserve money. If increased investment in research is desired, the funds should be distributed through a competitive process. In addition, citizens should be encouraged to give to causes that are relevant and important to them. The fiscal year 2008 budget includes:

- \$5,000,000 for certified local health department grants for anti-smoking programs;
- \$5,000,000 for grants and expenses of the tobacco use prevention program, the BASUAH (Brothers and Sisters United Against HIV/ AIDS⁵⁵) program, and asthma prevention.⁵⁶ Despite its name, BASUAH is not a separate organization; rather, it is a Blagojevich-sponsored “expanded social marketing effort designed to reach the African-American community with education, prevention and testing.”⁵⁷
- \$4,955,000 to the University of Chicago's transplant section for juvenile diabetes research;⁵⁸
- \$4,000,000 for expenses targeted to decrease health disparities in communities of color for breast and cervical cancer;⁵⁹
- \$2,000,000 to expand the availability of primary care for the Rural Health Center; \$700,000 for the Rural Medical Education Program at the University of Illinois-Rockford; \$441,700 for the Center for Rural Health; \$100,000 for the Rural/ Downstate Health Access Program;⁶⁰
- \$1,900,000 to the University of Illinois for sickle cell research; \$600,000 for the comprehensive sickle-cell clinic at University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Medical Center.⁶¹ The clinic was first

launched in 2001 with a grant from the state of Illinois. According to a UIC press release, the center was created to “treat children and adults and will have research and clinical components. It will also address social issues affecting patients and their families, such as jobs and insurance.”⁶²

- \$1,600,000 for the development of refugee health care;⁶³
- \$1.2 million for prostate cancer public awareness initiative;⁶⁴
- \$1,000,000 to the ALS Association Greater Chicago Chapter for research into discovering the cause and cure of ALS;⁶⁵
- \$1,000,000 to the American Lung Association for operations of the Quitline;⁶⁶
- \$400,000 for spinal cord injury research; \$50,000 for epilepsy treatment and education programs; \$50,000 for the prevention of blindness and the providing of eye care; \$50,000 for research dedicated to the elimination of brain tumors;
- \$297,000 for prostate cancer public awareness and screening;
- There is another \$200,000 for grants to public and private entities for prostate cancer research;⁶⁷
- \$250,000 for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) program⁶⁸ – but in 2005, there were only 1,294 infant deaths total in the state;⁶⁹
- \$150,000 to Children’s Memorial Hospital for the Illinois Violent Death Reporting System to “analyze data, identify risk factors, and develop prevention efforts”;
- \$100,000 for the Les Turner ALS Foundation for ALS research;⁷⁰
- \$100,000 to Shady Oaks Cerebral Palsy Camp for the purpose of purchasing handicap accessible playground equipment;⁷¹
- \$50,000 to United Cerebral Palsy of Springfield for the purpose of purchasing therapy equipment;⁷² and
- \$50,000 for sarcoidosis research.⁷³

Bureaucracy to the Rescue

Children

The state oversees child support to ensure that caregivers have the resources they need to raise children properly. This endeavor should be managed efficiently. In fiscal year 2008, the state is spending \$1.4 million for child support enforcement demonstration projects. When, where, and how these demonstrations were held is a mystery, and the utility of them is questionable at best. After all, it is

highly unlikely that a deadbeat parent was scared into compliance after seeing a demonstration project. The state is also spending \$13,058,700 for administrative efforts related to enhanced collection efforts, including a “paternity adjudication demonstration.”⁷⁴

The Child Support Enforcement division is receiving \$186,682,525 in fiscal year 2008.⁷⁵ Despite its ominous-sounding name, the division is not an armed police unit – rather, it manages the disparate tasks of locating the parent who does not live with the child; legally establishing the child’s father through DNA testing; getting child support and/or medical coverage; changing the amount a parent has to pay for child support; and helping with job search and employment services for the non-custodial parent if he or she is unemployed.

Don’t get confused, however – the enforcement division does not actually give caregivers the money they’re owed once it’s been collected. That is the responsibility of the State Disbursement Unit (SDU) – the central processing branch for child support payment and disbursement.⁷⁶ The state is spending \$16,159,400 for costs related to the SDU in fiscal year 2008.⁷⁷ In the agency’s own words, “In order to qualify for federal child support funds, each state must have a centralized unit to receive and distribute child support payments.”⁷⁸ Operations are contracted out to ACS State and Local Solutions – yet they continue to cost the state money.

Anyone who hates paying for a babysitter or day care center should be glad to know that in fiscal year 2008, the state is giving out \$130,611,100 for grants associated with child care services, and another \$3,142,600 for grants associated with migrant child care services.⁷⁹ The U.S. Census estimates that 6.9 percent of the state’s population is under 5 years old, which would be around 885,406 children.⁸⁰ Essentially, the state is spending \$151 per child – money that most families would rather have in-hand to make their own choices about child care.⁸¹

Other Programs

Taxpayers will pay \$40,218,050 for the Clyde L. Choate Mental Health and Developmental Center in fiscal year 2008.⁸² The Auditor General panned the Choate Mental Health Center in 2006 for the following problems: failure to review and track inventory, failure to maintain proper documentation of property transactions, Center records not matching amounts reported to the Illinois Office of the Comptroller, failure to document review of payroll vouchers, failure to perform timely employee evaluations, erroneously calculating an employee’s accrued vacation, and lack of adequate internal controls and documentation for the operation of the Patient Travel Trust Fund. These shortfalls aside, more money is being poured in this year.⁸³ The Center houses a 79 bed civil psychiatric hospital and a 183 bed residential center for individuals with developmental disabilities.⁸⁴ Even with tremendous turnover, the amount of money spent per patient is staggering.

The state just cannot decide how to address the issue of teen pregnancy. The government is spending \$985,500 in fiscal year 2008 for Family Planning Programs for contraceptive services, and another \$2.5 million for grants for an Abstinence Education Program.⁸⁵ Should those fail, however, there is always the “Parents Too Soon” program. In the state’s words, the Parents Too Soon program “serves new and expectant teen parents to help them develop nurturing relationships with their children, reduce the rate of subsequent pregnancy, improve the health and emotional development of the teen, enhance self sufficiency, and promote healthy growth and development of the children of teen parents.”⁸⁶ In fiscal year 2008, the program is receiving two grants of \$7,562,000 and \$3,665,200.⁸⁷

Illinois' Homelessness Prevention Program "provides rental assistance, utility assistance and supportive services directly related to the prevention of homelessness to eligible individuals and families who are in danger of eviction, foreclosure or homelessness or are currently homeless." Services offered include "payment of rent arrears to prevent eviction (3 months maximum), payment of a rent or security deposit (2 months maximum), and payment of utility bills and arrearage."⁸⁸ If this sounds like a good deal, that's because it is. The state is paying \$11 million for the homelessness prevention act in fiscal year 2008.⁸⁹ If Springfield will help pay rent, then there is really no need to worry about having enough money on the first of the month.

Individuals that cannot pay rent may not have a job. Never fear, the state can help with that. In fiscal year 2008, Illinois is setting aside two pots of money for the displaced homemaker grant program: \$50,000 and \$621,300.⁹⁰ The state defines a displaced homemaker as "an adult who has been out of the workforce, working to care for the home and children, and often has diminished or hidden marketable skills, has been dependent on public assistance or the income of a relative but is no longer supported by such income, or is a parent whose youngest dependent child will become ineligible to receive assistance under Part A of the Title IV of the Social Security Act, is unemployed or underemployed, and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment."⁹¹ Just send in a resume and a check may be forthcoming.

Mother Nature Thanks You

Children of the Corn

Corn is a major factor in the state's agricultural landscape. The federal government's enthusiasm for renewable fuels like ethanol has thrown Illinois farmers and scientists alike into a frenzy. Ethanol-related projects the state is funding in fiscal year 2008 include:

- \$20,077,000 for renewable fuels development;⁹² another \$3,975,000 for renewable fuels development; another \$20 million for more renewable fuels development;⁹³
- \$3 million for construction, expansion, remodeling, equipment, and related costs of the National Corn-to-Ethanol Research Center at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville;⁹⁴
- \$1,000,000 for the National Corn-to-Ethanol Research Center at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville;⁹⁵
- \$1,000,000 for support of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs to promote the advancement of corn kernel to fuel alcohol and value added co-products;⁹⁶
- \$500,000 for ethanol research;⁹⁷ another \$1.7 million for the ethanol fuel research program;⁹⁸ and
- \$225,000 for the Secretary of State to administer the Alternate Fuels Act.⁹⁹

Reduce, Reuse...

Illinois politicians are serious about making Illinois a green state – with taxpayers’ greenbacks, that is. The state is paying \$9,607,000 in fiscal year 2008 for recycling costs,¹⁰⁰ while \$3.6 million is going to promote energy efficiency.¹⁰¹

One can take a deep breath and if there is little pollution, it may be due to Springfield politicians who are spending \$900,000 for “expenses related to the development and implementation of a Targeted Clean Air Information and Education Program.”¹⁰² That sounds a lot like an ad campaign. Once that program is developed and implemented, however, it is burning through another \$1.5 million for “all costs associated with the clean air public awareness programs.”¹⁰³ The state is also spending \$150,000 for the “emissions reduction market program.”¹⁰⁴ There has to be a joke about hot air and politicians in here somewhere...

Greener Pastures

Illinois is home to thousands of local and state parks. Whether or not an individual has visited one or two in the past year, his or her tax dollars certainly have. Projects that will receive state funding in fiscal year 2008 include:

- \$1,477,424 and \$765,485 for site improvements at Carlyle Lake;¹⁰⁵
- \$1,119,114 for rehabilitating office/service area at Siloam State Park;
- \$248,793 for lake access boat docks at the resort at Eagle Creek State Park;
- \$244,751 for land acquisition at the Babe Woodyard Natural Area, Vermilion County;
- \$116,763 for an office building and interpretative center in Springfield (no state park named);
- \$24,604 to replace a floating boardwalk at Goose Lake Prairie Area;
- \$22,000 to the Giant City Stables for the costs associated with a new barn and improvements;¹⁰⁶
- \$20,000 to the Oakbrook Terrace Park District for the costs associated with splash pad renovations and a safety fence;¹⁰⁷ and
- \$10,000 to the Village of Homer Glen for the costs associated with the construction of a Healing Garden.¹⁰⁸

Seeds of Waste

Taxpayers are footing the bill for a wide array of environmental projects in fiscal year 2008. Some notable ones include:

- \$1,900,000 million for operating expenses of the North Point Marina at Winthrop Harbor;¹⁰⁹ and \$375,000 for repairs;¹¹⁰
- \$1,000,000 for “programs beneficial to advancing forests and forestry;” \$118,000 for the Illinois Forestry Development Council;¹¹¹ \$462,900 for the Urban Forestry Program;¹¹²
- \$550,000 for the conservation of pheasants;¹¹³
- \$273,400 for the Environment and Nature Training Institute for Conservation Education (ENTICE);¹¹⁴
- \$247,800 for an urban fishing program in conjunction with the Chicago Park District to provide fishing and resource management at park district lagoons;¹¹⁵
- \$200,000 for the Nursery Reforestation Program;¹¹⁶
- \$110,000 for the conservation of fur bearing mammals;¹¹⁷
- \$100,000 for the implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Program, which specifically provides waterfowl for the Mississippi Flyway; and another \$160,000 for those same waterfowl; and \$160,000 for the development of waterfowl propagation areas for the program; and \$500,000 to attract waterfowl,¹¹⁸ which must be some pretty spectacular birds for all that money;
- \$100,000 for waste reception facilities for recreational boaters;¹¹⁹ and
- \$10,000 for expenses incurred in acquiring salmon stamp design and printing salmon stamps.¹²⁰

While some Illinois residents go hungry or without insurance, these animals are laughing all the way to the... forest. This money would be more useful in the wallets of taxpayers. If people want to fund environmental causes, they are free to do so. Organizations like the World Wildlife Fund and the Sierra Club are enormously popular charities for thousands of Americans who choose to fund these causes. Illinois residents should not be paying for environmental issues because a politician believes it is the right thing to do. Illinois taxpayers, whether they agree with the mission of the organization or not, pay for the organization.

All The World’s a Stage...

The Illinois Arts Council aptly demonstrates that beauty is in the eye of the beholder – and not everyone agrees with the state’s interpretation of art. In fiscal year 2008, the Arts Council’s administrative costs are \$2.4 million; another \$13.6 million is being spent on grants and financial assistance.¹²¹

A few of those grants include:

- 1,000,000 to fund “The Illinois Channel”¹²² – at least with this channel, you can watch your money being spent by state legislators;
- \$377,000 for grants to public radio and TV stations for operating costs, and \$4.9 million for public radio and TV pursuant to the Public Radio and Television Grant Act;¹²³
- \$2,000 to Beixing Xiang for an apprenticeship in Chinese erhu music; \$2,000 to Magdalena Solarz for an apprenticeship in Polish folk dance;¹²⁴
- \$2,000 to San Bun for an apprenticeship in Cambodian music;
- \$1,000 to Mary Leandra Baker for an apprenticeship in traditional Irish music;
- \$1,000 to Sheila I. Alegria for an apprenticeship in Guatemalan marimba music;
- \$100,000 for the Sportsmen Against Hunger program;¹²⁵
- \$1,000 to Harriet Kurp for an apprenticeship in Ukrainian Easter eggs;
- \$700 to Benjamin E. June for his suicide attack pillow project.¹²⁶ June’s pillows are machine-embroidered black pillows marking every suicide bombing in Iraq since the U.S. invasion on March 20, 2003; according to June’s website, “pillows with more than 10 victims have small sized white lace around them... pillows with more than 25 victims have medium sized white lace around them... pillows where the attacker failed to kill anyone but himself have black lace around them.” Other pillows include backpack bombs, boats, dump trucks, and oil tankers.¹²⁷
- \$500 to Edra Soto Franklin for Consuming War exhibit support.¹²⁸ This exhibit included the following: a white oil drum labeled “Product of Iraq” that dispenses an endless stream of red liquid intended to resemble blood; a dynamite-laden tot posed in front of a fiery cloud; and a blond in an American flag bikini transforming into a multi-limbed deity wielding six different machine guns.¹²⁹
- \$500 to David S. Farber for polar bear photo essay support.¹³⁰

Those Who Don’t Know the Past Are Doomed to Repeat It

Land of Lincoln

Everyone knows that Illinois is “the Land of Lincoln.” The state’s favorite son played a monumental role in shaping the America we see today. As such, the state’s pride runs deep – and is costly.

An important upcoming date for the state is February 12, 2009 – the bicentennial of Lincoln’s birth. Accordingly, a commission has been established to promote all things Lincoln. As the state describes it, “The Illinois Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission serves to promote a deeper knowledge, understanding and engagement in the life and times of Abraham Lincoln, through conferences,

publications, preservation of Lincoln sites, and local, state-wide and national observances commemorating Abraham Lincoln's birthday on February 12, 2009."¹³¹ The Lincoln Bicentennial Commission's responsibilities are so monumental, in fact, that they earned a \$3 million grant in 2008.¹³² In fiscal year 2008, only \$500,000 is being set aside for the actual Lincoln Bicentennial¹³³ – but that amount will certainly increase in the 2009 budget.

Some endorsed bicentennial projects include:

- The 10th Illinois Volunteer Cavalry Regiment Band Period Ball on February 9, 2008 at the Governor's Mansion in Springfield. The website announces: "The 10th Illinois Volunteer Cavalry Regiment Band presents a period 1860 Presidential Ball on February 9, 2008 at the Governor's Mansion in Springfield. The band performs with period instruments complete with period dress."¹³⁴
- Sister Cities Association of Springfield. Gettysburg Address speech and essay contest winners from Springfield's Sister City, Ashikaga, Tochigi, Japan will make presentations at the Old State Capitol, on November 19, 2008, 2009 and 2010.
- Lincoln Bicentennial Bike Tour (the "Tour de Lincoln™") will follow as closely as possible the pioneering route followed by Abraham Lincoln from his birthplace in Hodgenville, Kentucky to important sites in Springfield, Illinois. Pre-tour events in Kentucky, and final weekend events in Springfield, are recent program additions.¹³⁵
- \$200,000 for research projects associated with Abraham Lincoln.¹³⁶

Taxpayers funded far more than just Lincoln tributes, however. One grant provides \$300,000 for the Amistad Commission.¹³⁷ The Amistad Commission was established on July 21, 2005 by Public Act 94-0285 to "survey, design, encourage, and promote the implementation of education and awareness programs in Illinois that are concerned with the African slave trade, slavery in America, the vestiges of slavery in this country, and the contributions of African-Americans in building our country; to develop workshops, institutes, seminars, and other teacher training activities designed to educate teachers on this subject matter; and that will be responsible for the coordination of events on a regular basis, throughout the State, that provide appropriate memorialization of the events concerning the enslavement of Africans and their descendants in America and their struggle for freedom, liberty, and equality."¹³⁸

Historical sites in Illinois have not been forgotten – in fact, they are making out like bandits. The Lewis and Clark historical site in Madison County is receiving \$246,400.¹³⁹ Monk's Mound at Cahokia Mounds is receiving \$1,475,865 – \$275,954 to replace stairs, \$1,009,932 for mound restoration, and \$189,979 to purchase private land within the park. The state is spending \$249,400 to acquire a private home near the David Davis home for a visitors' center; \$1,455,857 for restoring Jarrot Mansion in Cahokia, including site improvements and land acquisition; \$387,464 for repairing elevators at the Old State Capitol; \$110,444 to provide electricity to a campground at Lincoln's New Salem historic site.¹⁴⁰ The Bishop Hill Historic Site is receiving \$78,538; the Pullman Historic Site is receiving \$2,368,684 for stabilization and restoration.¹⁴¹ The Jacksonville Central Illinois Labor Temple is receiving \$300,000 for restoration work.¹⁴² The Sycamore Midwest Natural History Museum is receiving \$150,000 for reimbursement of all prior incurred costs associated with construction and renovation.¹⁴³ The Prairie Aviation Museum is receiving \$35,000 for the costs associated with construction of a display gallery.¹⁴⁴

Special Treatment

Baseball, Hotdogs, Apple Pie and... Ford

It is no secret the governor loves baseball. He's trying to orchestrate the takeover of Wrigley Field by the Illinois Sports Facility Authority, a government entity that already manages Comiskey Park (also known as U.S. Cellular Field). In fiscal year 2008, the Illinois Sports Facility Authority is getting \$40,782,000 for its "corporate purposes."¹⁴⁵ But smaller baseball organizations in the state also benefit from being America's pastime. The city of Danville is receiving \$300,000 for rehabilitation work to its baseball stadium;¹⁴⁶ the City of Riverton is receiving \$50,000 for Field of Dreams Park;¹⁴⁷ and the Village of Ste. Marie is receiving \$20,000 for ball park lights.¹⁴⁸

There are no Chevrolet plants in Illinois – but there is a Ford Technical Training Center. In fiscal year 2008, it is receiving \$4 million for planning, design, construction, and all other costs associated with building a new center.¹⁴⁹ This is not an unprecedented move for the multibillion dollar car manufacturer, however. Former Governor George Ryan awarded a \$6 million grant in 1999 to build a similar Ford Technical Training Center.¹⁵⁰

Location, Location, Location

The state has an unfortunate habit of buying up land and enabling townships to buy land for their own purposes. Unfortunately, even though these acquisitions are supposed to be for the public good, one consequence is that it leaves less land for everyone else, driving up the price for Illinoisans.

There are a number of examples of this largesse: the City of Granite City is receiving \$125,000 for road upgrades and land acquisition; the City of Fairview Heights is receiving \$40,000 for road and park upgrades and land acquisition; the Village of Caseyville is receiving \$40,000 for road and park upgrades and land acquisition; the Village of Swansea is receiving \$40,000 for road and park upgrades and land acquisition; and the Village of Fairmont City is receiving \$30,000 for road and park upgrades and land acquisition.¹⁵¹ The DuPage County Forest Preserve District is receiving \$300,000 for all costs associated with land acquisition and site development for a bike path connector to Meacham Grove Forest Preserve and North Central DuPage Regional Trail at Foster Avenue.¹⁵²

A women's shelter, WINGS, is receiving \$100,000 to reduce the mortgage on the resale store.¹⁵³ The Golden Apple Foundation is receiving \$100,000 for all costs associated with the acquisition and renovation of the Sessions Building at 605 East 11th Street in Chicago.¹⁵⁴ Joseph Academy is receiving \$25,000 for all costs associated with renovation, construction, and acquisition of a facility. The Northeast DuPage Special Recreation Association is receiving \$50,000 for all costs associated with renovation, construction, and acquisition of facilities to serve people with disabilities.¹⁵⁵ The LaSalle County PADS is receiving \$100,000 for all costs associated with the purchase and/or construction of a building for a resale shop.¹⁵⁶

Organizational Support

Having friends in the right places can lead to a handout from the state of Illinois. The Secretary of State's budget has earmarked \$30,000 to provide grants for charitable purposes sponsored by African-American fraternities and sororities.¹⁵⁷ Beta Sigma Phi of Lincoln is being awarded \$10,000 for the costs associated with school supplies.¹⁵⁸ The Springfield Figure Skating Club is being awarded \$40,000 for the costs associated with youth programs.¹⁵⁹ The preparation and setup of the 2007 national high school finals rodeo will cost taxpayers \$368,200.¹⁶⁰ Promotion of the Illinois horse racing and breeding industry will cost \$71,200.¹⁶¹

Industry Favoritism

It is widely known that the governor is determined to create a wine industry in Illinois. In a 2005 press release, he argued, "Before Prohibition, Illinois was one of the top wine producing states in the nation. But it wasn't until the last decade that we've started to rebuild that segment of our agriculture industry... If we continue that growth and provide our grape growers and wine makers with the knowledge and resources they need to produce a quality product, we will all benefit from the results as more jobs are created and tourism dollars brought into the local economy."¹⁶² Taxpayers will pay \$150,000 in fiscal year 2008 "for expenses related to a contractual viticulturist and enologist."¹⁶³ The state will dole out an additional \$245,000 for "for grants, contracts, and administrative expenses associated with the development of the Illinois Grape and Wine Industry, including prior year costs."¹⁶⁴ Finally, it will pay another \$165,000 for grants, contracts, and administrative expenses – under the tourism board budget.¹⁶⁵

A number of agricultural grants are being doled out in fiscal year 2008 – after all, it is a farming state. For example, \$35,400 is going to swine disease research, while \$16,800 is going to bovine disease research.¹⁶⁶ Seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars is being spent "for the Detection, Eradication, and Control of Exotic Pests, such as the Asian Long-Horned Beetle and Gypsy Moth."¹⁶⁷ And Illinois taxpayers are paying \$1.9 million "for expenses connected with the promotion and marketing of Illinois agriculture and agricultural exports."¹⁶⁸

Even the oil industry is receiving money: "The Illinois Petroleum Resources Board was created July 10, 1998 by the Illinois Petroleum Education and Marketing Act. Its mission is to demonstrate to the general public the importance of the Illinois oil exploration and production industry; to encourage the wise and efficient use of energy; to promote environmentally sound production methods and technologies; to develop existing supplies of State oil resources; and to support research and education activities concerning the oil exploration and production industry."¹⁶⁹ In fiscal year 2008, \$9,000 is being spent for administration of the Illinois Petroleum Education and Marketing Act.¹⁷⁰

Putting the Cart before the Horse

There are remedies for the state's floundering economy. Common sense dictates the creation of a business-friendly environment to attract capital and investment from around the country. But instead of doing that, the state has decided to dole out perks to a few favored industries, while raising taxes and persecuting businesses with proposals like the governor's failed gross receipts tax. With the possibility of increased taxes and regulations, no wonder businesses don't want to open up in Illinois.

International Trade

In fiscal year 2008, the state is spending \$202,000 for NAFTA Opportunity Centers.¹⁷¹ The state says they “provide small and medium sized Illinois firms expertise and assistance in all phases of exporting,” giving firms “key overseas opportunities and identify buyers, agents and distributors,” and “serv[ing] as local liaison to the ITO and other government export resources.”¹⁷² No one can find the provision in the Illinois constitution that empowers the state to create this program; it should be funded by businesses. The state is also spending \$1.7 million for “all costs associated with new and expanding international markets to increase export and reverse investment opportunities for Illinois business and industries, including prior year costs.”¹⁷³

Specific Industry Help

Despite the state’s “green” push mentioned earlier, Illinois still managed to provide \$23.8 million for coal technology development assistance;¹⁷⁴ \$3.4 million for coal development programs; \$50 million for the coal revival program; \$5 million for capital development of coal resources; and another \$17 million for capital development of coal resources in the state, including but not limited to a commercial scale project that produces electric power and hydrogen and demonstrates underground storage of up to 1 million metric tons annual of carbon dioxide.¹⁷⁵

Perhaps spurred by the embarrassment of *Chicago* being filmed in Toronto, the state is spending more than \$1 million for the Illinois film office.¹⁷⁶ It would be more attractive to film companies if they weren’t charged exorbitant taxes on everything they consumed while on location in Illinois.

Regulations

Illinois’ regulatory climate is also unfriendly to businesses. Quite simply, if these rules abound in Illinois and not elsewhere, the industries will leave. By trying to squeeze out extra money from businesses, the state is scaring off the goose that lays the golden eggs.

Here are a few examples of fees and regulations the state imposes:

- \$3,900,000 for the Regulation of Racing Program;¹⁷⁷
- \$1,300,000 for grants to local law enforcement agencies to administer the “charitable games, pull tabs and jar games act.”¹⁷⁸ The Illinois Pull Tabs and Jar Games Act regulates the activities of veterans’ organizations, religious organizations, and youth athletic organizations, to name a few.¹⁷⁹ Apparently those church bingo games pose a real threat to the state lottery system.
- \$1,300,000 to “promote public awareness of the dangers of securities fraud;”¹⁸⁰ \$230,000 for forwarding real estate appraisal fees to the federal government;¹⁸¹
- \$500,000 to administer the tanning facility permit act; \$1.3 million to administer the Illinois Plumbing License Law;¹⁸²

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- \$242,000 for the Beverage Alcohol Sellers and Servers Education and Training (BASSET) Program;¹⁸³ this program, sponsored by the Illinois Liquor Control Commission, is not mandatory;¹⁸⁴ and
- \$30,000 from the Professional Regulation Evidence Fund to the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation for the purchase of equipment to conduct “covert activities”¹⁸⁵ – against businesses whose tax dollars go into that fund.

Conclusion

As the *Piglet Book* demonstrates, waste and abuse are rampant throughout the state government. As long as politicians view the state budget as a pot of money that can be used to buy favors and allies, the people of Illinois will lose. Thus, the first step Springfield should take is to cut the waste identified in this report, from corporate welfare and subsidies to research grants and mortgage payments.

Second, Illinois needs to establish a state version of the Grace Commission to analyze every nook and cranny of the budget to cut waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement. With private-sector expertise and the help of independent and nonpartisan groups like the Illinois Policy Institute, this group would function as a standing committee to scrutinize expenditures and ensure the elimination of wasteful spending.

Finally, Illinois should enact a Funding Accountability and Transparency Act – legislation that would create a Google-like search engine and database to track state grants, contracts, and earmarks. Rep. John Fritchey (D- Chicago) introduced such legislation in 2007 that would require the full disclosure of entities and organizations that receive state funds. It also requires the Governor’s Office of Management and Budget to establish a searchable website.¹⁸⁶ Senator Barack Obama co-sponsored and passed similar legislation at the federal level in 2006. The very least Illinois can do is follow his example.

Legislators owe it to Illinoisans to spend each dollar carefully. Every member of the state’s legislature should make it a top priority to trim every ounce of pork and waste from the Illinois state budget. Doing so would demonstrate a new commitment on the part of the government to the people of the state – the commitment to spend their hard-earned tax dollars *well*.

Illinois’ fiscal problems are not insurmountable. The *2008 Illinois Piglet Book* is not intended to be comprehensive, but it is a first step to identify particular problems. It will take the bold leadership of elected officials, bureaucrats, and the people of Illinois to demand accountability from their government.

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