

WHAT SB 1229 MEANS FOR STATE GOVERNMENT

A record of constructive collective bargaining

- Throughout some 40 years of collective bargaining, Illinois state employees have always been able to reach contract settlements without a work stoppage. Despite sometimes difficult negotiations, state government unions and the administrations with whom they've negotiated have been committed to reaching a settlement that was fair to employees and taxpayers – and both parties have always strongly preferred to avoid the disruption of services that could result from a strike.

Uncertainty threatens public services with time running out

- Unfortunately, state government is now faced with an unprecedented situation: Today, after more than six months of negotiations, state employee unions remain committed to reaching a fair agreement at the bargaining table, but the Rauner Administration shows no sign of moving away from its extreme and far-reaching demands that would dramatically weaken economic security and workplace protections for tens of thousands of state workers.
- With barely one month remaining until the current contracts with more than a dozen unions are set to expire, the parties remain very far apart – and the Administration has failed to commit to keep the existing contract terms in place while bargaining continues.
- Illinois citizens who rely on the myriad of state services face uncertainty – will state government continue providing needed public services? Or will the governor seek a confrontation that could disrupt those services and the lives of thousands of state workers and millions of Illinois residents?

A responsible option to help avert conflict and disruption

- SB 1229 amends the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act (IPLRA) with respect to state agencies under the governor for the period July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2019. It provides for an alternative to strikes as a means of resolving an impasse during the negotiation of collective bargaining agreements.
- This legislation extends the interest arbitration procedures that currently exist under IPLRA for public safety employees to all of the more than 30,000 employees of Illinois state government agencies under the direct authority of the governor.
- In the current unprecedented situation, providing for interest arbitration can ensure that public services are not disrupted. Once this legislation becomes law, either party can invoke mediation and, if necessary, interest arbitration. Once the arbitration hearing has begun, the possibility of a strike or lockout is eliminated.
- In order to minimize conflict and disruption, SB 1229 also provides for the continuation of all provisions of the expired contract until the arbitration process is concluded and a ruling issued.

Moving forward

- The parties can and should continue to negotiate, hopefully to reach an agreement at the bargaining table, and if necessary submit their differences to an independent arbitrator.
- The legislation does not take away the right of employees to strike. Rather it places limits on the potential for a strike or lockout by allowing either party to invoke the arbitration procedures that are provided for in Section 14 of the law. If the arbitration procedures are not invoked, then union members retain the right to strike.
- Interest arbitration has been the impasse procedure for police, firefighters, and security employees in Illinois for more than 30 years. Under the law, the process provides for the selection of an independent arbitrator by mutual agreement of both management and the union. In reaching a decision, the arbitrator considers factors including the “interests and welfare of the public, and the financial ability of the [state] to meet those costs.”
- The legislation would affect more than 30,000 state employees who provide vital public services throughout Illinois – safeguarding children from abuse and neglect, aiding families in need, monitoring air and water quality, caring for people with disabilities and for elderly veterans, responding to natural disasters and public health crises, maintaining our highways, ensuring that nursing homes meet quality standards and much more.