

**Rep. Greg Harris • 13th District**  
**Springfield Update • January 27, 2016**

**Governor's State of the State Speech**

Today, the Governor presented his State of the State speech to the General Assembly, looking back on how Illinois has progressed in 2015. Sadly, things are worse today than a year ago. Our colleges and universities, public schools and social services like childcare, autism, early intervention, senior services, mental health and substance abuse treatment, supports for the disabled, homeless youth, breast cancer patients, HIV/AIDS and immigrant/refugee services are collapsing around us.

Our debt is steadily increasing and now exceeds \$7 billion dollars, the credit ratings agencies have downgraded the state and warned us that the lack of a state budget puts us in great peril. According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security, there were 3,000 jobs lost in 2015, the greatest number in years. In the first weeks of 2016 alone, there have been over 1,000 jobs lost due to budget problems, including 750 from Lutheran Social Services alone who have not been paid by the State.

Governor Rauner included many important areas to work on during his speech, including

- Improving state IT systems
- Improving higher education and vocational training
- Reforming the state procurement system
- Changing elementary and secondary education funding statewide
- Improving outcomes in the human services system

- Workers comp and tort system reforms
- Criminal justice reform and better alternative sentencing systems
- Pension reform

Many of these programs have merit and will help the government bureaucracy and hopefully save some money and improve outcomes in coming years. Unfortunately they will not solve the current situation in which we find ourselves due to Governor Rauner's veto of the State Budget, and almost all are dependent on having a budget in place. Getting a budget in place should be job one, and the broad outlines of what needs to be done are not a mystery.

Business-oriented groups like the Civic Federation, the bond rating agencies like Moody's and Standard and Poor, children's advocacy groups like Voices for Illinois Children, philanthropic groups like the United Way and statewide public policy advocates like the Responsible Budget Coalition all have said that the Democrats and Republicans need to pass a budget which will require some cuts, and will require additional revenue, and the Governor must sign it and the sooner the better. The longer this crisis goes on, the worse the situation gets.

I chair the Appropriations—Human Services Committee in the House. I want to share with you some of the data that I have been presented in the last few days that shows how dire our situation is, and the human toll the Governor's budget vetoes have had. This is just a sampling of the truly situation developing in all 102 counties throughout Illinois, which I fear will rapidly escalate:

- Last Friday, Lutheran Social Services announced closing of mental health services for children, families and adults in Villa Park, Dixon, Wheaton, Prospect Heights, Berwyn, Des Plaines, Downers Grove, Elmhurst and Berwyn
- Also closed were substance abuse and addiction treatment services in Chicago and Elgin
- LSSI also was forced to stop in-home services for seniors in Chicago, Southern Cook County, Canton, Dekalb, Freeport, Moline, Peoria, Rock Island, Henry and Mercer Counties, as well as Rockford, Winnebago, Boone and Ogle Counties
- LSSI shuttered respite care for veterans and their families in Rockford and Streamwood.
- Children's Home and Aid was forced to close crisis intervention and services for at-risk youth on the South and West Sides of Chicago.
- Catholic Charities has warned us that their continued ability to serve the community is in jeopardy because of millions of dollars of unpaid bills for services already provided.
- The central offices of The Autism Project were shut down virtually eliminating services for non-verbal children on the spectrum in Illinois.
- 5,458 families lost emergency and transitional housing
- One of the most successful criminal justice diversion programs for youth, Redeploy Illinois, has had to shut down in 23 counties.
- 48,200 children lost child care, a 25% reduction
- The United Way of Illinois reports that across all their regions 216,000 of the most fragile and vulnerable have lost services, and by the end March 23% of human services agencies they fund in Illinois may have

to close

- The United Way also reports that without a signed budget soon, a majority of the public/private partnerships to serve the most vulnerable may collapse.
- According to a United Way survey just conducted of all providers in Illinois, here are some topline data of service cuts across the State:
  - Mental Health and Substance abuse treatment: 25%
  - Senior Services: 26%
  - Disability Services: 29%
  - Youth Development: 31%
  - Employment/Job Training: 32%
  - Adult Education: 34%

I look forward to working with the Governor, my House and Senate colleagues and community stakeholders on passing a responsible budget. It should not be held dependent on unrelated, non-budgetary issues or agendas. As always I look forward to your comments and questions, and can be reached at [greg@gregharris.org](mailto:greg@gregharris.org).