

## Groups Pushing For Income Tax Increase Will Benefit At Taxpayers' Expense

The beat of the drum grows louder and louder calling for massive state income tax and sales tax increases. Almost every day a new politician or group is demanding more money from taxpayers. There was no income tax increase in 2006. But in 2007 the battle is going to be much bigger and much more expensive as these groups join the drum line.

**A+ Illinois** - A government employee union-funded front group is pushing hard for a 67% state income tax increase. In December, A+ Illinois announced the hiring of a new Campaign Manager to "*direct a growing statewide staff, manage a multi-million dollar budget, and tap the energy and resources of the more than 150 member organizations of A+ Illinois*". They also hired four more full-time Regional Organizers in December. Leading up to the November election, A+ Illinois "*dropped somewhere around \$200K worth of mail and robocalls to targeted voters in over 4,000 precincts across roughly ten days,*" to use their own words.

**Ralph Martire** - Martire has been the drum major for the 67% income tax increase in Illinois for years now. His Center for Tax and Budget Accountability (accountable to government employees, not taxpayers) is also funded by the government employee unions that would love to see higher taxes so their pay and pensions and union memberships continue to grow. The Chicago Sun-Times runs Martire's stale columns every other week and his topic is always about raising the income tax and spending more money.

**Commercial Club of Chicago, Civic Committee** - These big business executives released a flawed report in December calling for a 33% state income tax increase and more sales taxes without ANY tax relief elsewhere. Many of the Commercial Club of Chicago's members receive large sums of corporate subsidies from Illinois taxpayers, such as the Chicago Bears, Chicago White Sox, Chicago Bulls, Quaker, Hospira Inc., Boeing, and Motorola to name a few. Even more of their members enjoy large government contracts.

**Bipartisan Legislative Education Reform Caucus** - The tax raisers mentioned above are dangerous, but not as dangerous as a group that was just formed by Rep. Robert Pritchard (R-DeKalb) who recently told the Chicago Tribune, "*I want to make sure we've got a coordinated package here before I sign on to a tax increase.*" Rep. Robert Pritchard is spearheading this caucus that is seriously considering raising the income and sales tax. This group has already held a two-day retreat where they featured Ralph Martire and A+ Illinois, but included no one saying they already have enough of our money and it just needs to be spent wisely and efficiently.

The Service Employees Union, Illinois Education Association, Illinois Federation of Teachers, Chicago Teachers Union, AFSCME, Illinois Farm Bureau, and the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus are also among the groups demanding higher income taxes.

In both the Illinois House and Senate, Democrats representing Chicago and its suburbs were the sponsors of legislation in the last session to increase the income tax by 67% and they will undoubtedly introduce similar legislation very soon. Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), titled "*Education Funding Reform Act of 2007,*" has already been introduced by Senate President Emil Jones Jr. to highlight his top priority in 2007, which is to increase taxes for more unaccountable government spending. SB 1 is currently blank except for the title, but large income tax increases will certainly be added to SB 1 very soon.

Last year they were going after nearly \$9 billion in yearly tax increases "for the children" even though the Illinois State Board of Education's request is only \$800 million additional this year. When they are demanding that much more money without yet offering any reforms to improve education quality and accountability, questions need to be raised about their motives. It appears they want our money more for their own benefit than they do to actually improve the quality of education "for the children" in Illinois.

Big business likes its profitable government contracts and subsidies and government employee unions like their lucrative jobs. These special interests have more money and clout, but the voters would still rather see tax cuts than tax hikes. Get ready though, because the battle over our income is going to be won or lost this year.

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