



OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
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**STATE SENATE VOTES 52-3 TO OVERRIDE GOVERNOR'S
VETO OF COMPTROLLER MENDOZA'S DEBT
TRANSPARENCY ACT**

SPRINGFIELD — In an unprecedented show of bi-partisan unity, 34 Democratic and 18 Republican state senators joined House members of both parties to overwhelmingly override Governor Bruce Rauner's veto of Comptroller Susana Mendoza's Debt Transparency Act.

"I want to thank every member of the Illinois State Senate who came together in bi-partisan support of transparency today," Comptroller Mendoza said. "The taxpayers of Illinois are the real winners here. For too long, governors of both parties have been able to hide unpaid bills at their agencies. This legislation opens up government to citizens, taxpayers and my office, which is charged with paying the state's bills."

The Debt Transparency Act requires The Governor's agencies to report monthly, instead of just three months late once a year, how many bills they are sitting on. In less than three years, Governor Rauner has more than tripled the state's backlog of unpaid bills from \$5 billion to \$16.7 billion. He vetoed the bill passed by both houses in order to avoid having to disclose how many bills he is hiding from public view.

"Today's vote puts to rest any argument that this bill was partisan," Comptroller Mendoza said. "State senators from both parties said the Governor is wrong – the Governor should not be hiding bills. We don't really know how many bills are sitting at the Governor's agencies. Sometimes we get bombarded by an overnight surprise of a billion dollars worth of bills we never knew about and with their votes today, the legislators said clearly that we need a more accountable cash and debt management

process. I especially want to thank Senator Andy Manar, the senate sponsor, for his work on this bill," she said.

House members created a precedent two weeks ago when they voted unanimously – 112-0 to override the Governor's veto of the Debt Transparency Act. In the senate, only three Republicans voted against Transparency.

Using analogies of a home checkbook, Comptroller Mendoza talked to legislators and citizens about the need to have more than one report a year. The bill would also require the agencies to disclose how much in late payment interest penalties the bills have accrued; whether they are covered by appropriations and which state funds they must be paid from. The act takes effect Jan. 1.

"I take my responsibility to manage taxpayer dollars very seriously," Comptroller Mendoza said. "As Comptroller, I am looking to improve processes and increase financial transparency in order

to better manage our debt and safeguard taxpayer dollars. Knowing the extent of our state's liabilities is an essential component of responsible cash and debt management and will put us on the path to sounder fiscal footing. This is the role of the Comptroller's Office today, and moving forward."

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