



OFFICE OF THE COMPTROLLER
STATE OF ILLINOIS

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CONTACT:
Abdon.Pallasch@illinoiscomptroller.gov 312-835-3317
Jamey.Dunn@Illinoiscomptroller.gov 217-670-9134

**ON BUDGET DAY, LIKE GROUNDHOG DAY, STILL WAITING
FOR OUR FIRST BALANCED BUDGET**

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – Valentine's Day felt more like Groundhog Day as Governor Rauner once again presented a pretend budget he called "balanced." Budgets don't get balanced on wishful thinking, empty promises, pixie dust and magic beans.

- There is nothing in this budget proposal about how he will pay down the \$8.9 Billion backlog of bills his administration ran up.
- There is nothing in here about the \$1 Billion dollars in Late Payment Interest Penalties.
- He does not explain how he will address the \$2.3 Billion operational deficit created by his administration's spending during the budget impasse.

Our office's second monthly Debt Transparency Report is available today. It provides unprecedented transparency into fiscal matters and has reinvented the way legislators can look at the budget and painting a clear picture of the fiscal consequences of going without one for more than two years.

Having access to this data is important for lawmakers and taxpayers as they evaluate the Governor's proposal. But I have said since I took office that the budget is not just numbers on a spread sheet – It is men, women and children all over the state who are affected by what we do here and whether we manage this budget right. I invited some of those people with me today to watch the Governor's Budget Address.

Melissa Norman, an advocate for people with Disabilities at the Springfield Center for Independent Living, is here as my guest. The impasse has had a devastating effect on people with disabilities.

"Due to the budget impasse, I was often uncertain if I would continue to receive the vital home services that I need to be able to work, contribute to my community and pay my fair share of taxes," Norman said. "I hope that each and every public official will remember that behind every piece of legislation and every line item are people's lives."

At the end of January, Easterseals closed two Chicago-area programs for adults with autism, cutting off services to 44 people. It's one of three organization of its kind to cut services for people with developmental disabilities in the Chicago area in recent weeks. But this isn't just a challenge facing those in need of services in Chicago. It's a story that's played out over and over across our state as providers have had to cut back to keep their doors open--what little state funding they got coming months too late.

Also with me today are Steve and Deann French. Steve French lost his mother to Legionnaires' Disease at the Quincy Veterans Home. When he called to check on his mother he was told she was fine, even though she had already died of Legionnaire's Disease.

"We are thankful for the conscientious elected officials as well as the credible news outlets and reporters that have pushed for answers to the ongoing Legionnaires problem at the Quincy Veterans' Home," Steve and Dean French said. "It is our hope that their diligent pursuit of the truth will help to highlight exactly what needs to be done differently when such an outbreak occurs, so that no other veterans and their families have to go through what we and others did in 2015, 2016 and last fall. Our veterans deserve better."

Without a budget, the state has also gone without a capital construction plan, which could have provided funds for a new plumbing system at the veterans home. During the impasse, the state incurred more than \$1 billion in late payment interest penalties, that's money that could have paid for new plumbing, or an entire new complex, in Quincy. The administration disclosed two more cases of Legionnaire's Disease at the Veterans home Tuesday.

The Governor reportedly wants to lower the state income tax rate. The last time he did that – campaigning on a cut in the tax rate without making any corresponding cuts in state spending, he more than tripled the state's backlog of bills from \$5 billion to \$16.7 billion. He is once again counting on changes to the pension system that would have to survive a legal challenge and limits to collective bargaining that he has been unable to rally support for in the legislature. He's had three years to get these things done. He needs to spell out how it's going to be different this time.

You can view this release on our website here.

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