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**COMPTROLLER MENDOZA AND BIPARTISAN LEGISLATIVE
GROUP INTRODUCE "TRUTH IN HIRING" ACT**

Transparency initiative would end long-standing practice of "offshoring" Governor staff salaries to state agencies to mask the Governor's budget

SPRINGFIELD — Illinois Comptroller Susana A. Mendoza joined State Senator Andy Manar, D-Bunker Hill, State Representative Christian Mitchell, D-Chicago, State Representative David McSweeney, R-Barrington Hills, and State Representative Greg Harris, D-Chicago, Thursday to introduce the "Truth in Hiring" Act to bring all "offshored" employees of the Governor's office back into the Governor's budget.

For too long, Illinois governors – Democratic and Republican – have engaged in the deceptive practice of "offshoring." The expression comes from the practice of rich people hiding their assets in offshore accounts, in tax havens like the Cayman Islands or Panama, to avoid paying taxes on them.

Illinois governors "offshore" their employees' salaries to other agencies -- for example, paying an education advisor \$250,000 from the Department of Human Services; or a deputy chief of staff \$140,000 from the Illinois State Police's budget -- to mask the true size of the Governor's budget.

The most recent payroll shows only 44 of Governor Rauner's staffers are actually paid from the Governor's budget. MOST of his staff – 58 people – are hidden in other agency payrolls. If the Governor were honestly reporting all the people working in his office, he would have to disclose his office budget is more than \$10 million, instead of the \$4.9 million that is budgeted for the current fiscal year.

"That's more than \$5 million being secretly taken away from agencies that need it, like the Department of Children and Family Services that investigates child abuse; or the Department of Aging that cares for Illinois' seniors," Comptroller Mendoza said. "This ill-advised practice is silently siphoning money from health care, environmental protection, juvenile justice, economic development and public safety."

The Truth in Hiring Act, (HB5121; SB3233) simply says that if an employee works in the Governor's office, they will be paid from the Governor's payroll. Their salary will be counted in the Governor's budget. Their salary will not be pulled from agencies that are supposed to protect the most vulnerable or put state troopers on the highways.

"Offshoring is wrong. It was wrong when Governor Quinn did it. It was wrong when Governor Blagojevich did it. It was wrong when Governor Ryan did it. And it's still wrong when Governor Rauner does it," Comptroller Mendoza said. "This deceptive practice needs to stop."

"Every time a governor shifts a new, unexpected six-figure salary onto a state agency's plate, dollars that had been prioritized for important purposes – economic development, senior services and child protection, to name a few – are being diverted to a paycheck instead," Senator Manar said. "Governors should understand the importance of being transparent about their expenses. Taxpayers who foot the bill for government, and frankly the lawmakers who determine the appropriations for state agencies, deserve that accountability."

"This practice subverts the appropriations process. It takes money away from state agencies that protect children, the environment and public safety," Representative Mitchell said. "This governor, and any future governors, should present the true cost of their staff in their office's budget and make the case for why they need that level of funding."

To be clear, this initiative is not intended to criticize employees who have found themselves offshored. In many cases they accepted jobs with the governor's office not knowing their salaries would be offshored to other agencies.

This initiative follows Comptroller Mendoza's Debt Transparency Act, which passed last year with unanimous or near-unanimous overrides. The state is already seeing the benefits of that reform as legislators on both sides of the aisle have more up-to-date numbers to craft a budget with and regular citizens have a clearer picture of the state's finances.

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