

Item #19:
Village Clerk Schultheis
Legislative Update



3110 RFD, ILLINOIS 60047-9613

April 19, 2011

Representative/Senator XXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX

Dear State Senator _____/State Representative _____:

I am writing to urge that you to vote “No” for any further the reductions of the municipalities share of the state income tax (the Local Government Distributive Fund (LGDF) being considered by the Illinois legislature.

Municipalities have received 10% of the total income tax for many years and this has its roots in the 1970 Illinois constitution and when Governor Ogilvie instituted the income tax. This 10% share was not continued in the recent 2% increase of the state income tax. While that alone was an abrogation of the State/municipal compact of shared revenue, many of us understood the fiscal woes of the state and reluctantly accepted the decision.

As you know, the municipal share of state income tax is not a grant. Rather the State is simply the collector of the funds and is obligated under state law dating back to the 1970's to disburse the funds to Illinois municipalities. These are tax dollars paid by state residents with the expectation that our village will receive the money to pay for local services such as police; emergency management; road maintenance/snow removal; storm water management, etc.

The Village of Long Grove is a non-home rule community that does not levy a municipal property tax on our 8,025 residents but rather funds operations through user fees, sales taxes and shared revenues. At an estimated annual value of \$615,919, these shared revenues make up more than 27% of the Village's \$2.25M annual budget. If these funds are eliminated, the Village finances will be devastated and our only option will be to ask our residents to approve a property tax referendum to replace these funds or face further reductions in police protection, road maintenance, snow removal, public works projects and staff. In short, the residents will be asked to pay even more taxes, during what are already very difficult financial times, on top of the recent 67% state income tax increase simply to preserve their existing services.

Raiding these essential local revenues is not “sharing the pain”, but rather passing the buck and increasing the taxes on Illinois residents and still not solving the State's self-created \$13B deficit. You must vote against the State's taking any of these essential funds away from local governments.

Very truly yours,
Maria Rodriguez
Village President

David Lothspeich

From: ILCMA ILCMA [ILCMA@wpo.cso.niu.edu]
Sent: Wednesday, April 20, 2011 5:12 PM
To: ILCMA@wpo.cso.niu.edu
Subject: URGENT: State Shared Income Tax Legislation - Action Needed!
Importance: High
Attachments: SDOC5059.pdf; Rigoni, Al.vcf

Dear Colleagues:

Attached please find letters the Skokie Mayor has written to our state elected officials in regard to the state income tax. As you know municipalities have received 10% of the total income tax for many years and this has its roots in the 1970 Illinois constitution and when Governor Ogilvie instituted the income tax. This 10% share was not continued in the recent 2% increase of the state income tax. While that alone was an abrogation of the State/municipal compact of shared revenue, many of us understood the fiscal woes of the state and accepted the decision.

We are now hearing very strong signals that the legislature will reduce or eliminate the original tax sharing arrangement. The signals are loud and clear from members of the house and senate who are using terms like "shared pain". The value of the income tax to municipalities is estimated by the Illinois municipal league at \$76.75 per capita for 2011. The loss of this revenue will hurt all municipalities but arguably will be devastating for non-home rule communities.

As immediate past Chair of the Illinois Municipal League Legislative committee, I often heard from legislators in Springfield something like "I have not heard from my mayor so they must be OK with this legislation". Hard to argue with that. I urge you or your Mayor or President to communicate your position in regard to this issue to your legislators as soon as possible.

Thank you

Albert J. Rigoni
Village Manager
Village of Skokie
5127 Oakton
Skokie, Ill. 60077

al.rigoni@skokie.org
P: 847-933-8210



George Van Dusen
Mayor

April 19, 2011

Phone (847) 933-8269
Fax (847) 933-8200

State Senator Jeff Schoenberg
2031-J Stratton Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear State Senator Schoenberg:

As this session of the General Assembly proceeds, I'm growing more apprehensive regarding this state budget and the maintenance of the municipal share of the state income tax (the local distribution fund). The municipalities' share of the state income tax is not a grant. This share provided to municipalities was the basis of the original agreement to impose a state income tax and was an irrevocable commitment to municipalities in return for their support of the tax. This action would be akin to a partner unilaterally changing the terms of a partnership.

At a recent presentation to the Illinois Municipal League, a Representative addressed the issue of the state budget by twice telling us there must be "shared pain". This leads me to believe the decision on stripping the municipal share of the State tax in whole, or in part, is at hand.

The Village of Skokie saw the economic crisis coming and for two consecutive fiscal years reduced its operating budget, took action that reduced the workforce by at least five percent and enhanced local revenues in the face of local opposition. In contrast, the State of Illinois saw the economic crisis coming and seemingly ignored it, not making the difficult and responsible decisions. The State is proposing "shared pain", when it should be grappling with shared responsibility to our same constituents

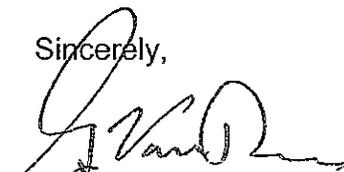
Now the State is asking the Village of Skokie to bail-out the State?

Illinois legislators deal in billions of dollars so I want to give you a municipal perspective. Skokie receives approximately \$5 million per year in our share of the income tax. This amount is the equivalent of 50 full-time firefighters, or 50 full-time police officers, (inclusive of benefits). It is the equivalent of 63 Public Works employees. Each of these departments has approximately 100 employees. Quite frankly a loss of \$5,000,000 would be devastating.

Any diminution of the shared income tax for municipalities is harmful to the Village of Skokie as a municipal corporation. The effect will be either more taxes or greatly reduced services, inasmuch as we've already felt the pain while balancing our budget. I am completely opposed to either option and, therefore, request you vote in opposition to any such legislation.

I hope that the Village can count on you.

Sincerely,



George Van Dusen
Mayor

GVD:em

cc: Albert J. Rigoni, Village Manager
J. Patrick Hanley, Corporation Counsel

Representative
Senator

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am writing to request that you vote against the reductions currently being considered by the Illinois legislature of the Local Government Distributive Fund and the Motor Fuel Tax fund.

These funds are funded by tax dollars paid by state residents with the expectation that our village will receive the money to pay for local services such as road repairs and storm water management. The State is simply the collector of the funds and is obligated to disburse the funds to Illinois municipalities in accordance with state statute. Now the legislature is acting as though it has the right to use this money to pay for the debt it has accumulated over the years due to its poor fiscal management!

Tower Lakes is a quiet, bedroom community with a population just under 1,300. Tower Lakes has no commercial, industrial or retail businesses and therefore collects little in sales taxes. In addition, Tower Lakes is not a home rule community and cannot initiate a local tax without a referendum.

Tower Lakes manages its budget. Our Village Board prioritizes work projects for the year and is conservative in its use of municipal funds. Over the last three years, our village has lost 17% of our share of the state collected funds with the decrease in collection of state income tax revenues and corresponding decrease in distribution to the village. Our Village Board has trimmed the budget each year and still manages to stay on budget by reducing the number and scope of road repairs, storm water projects and deferring capital improvements and maintenance.

If the State starts taking municipalities' funds, the village will not be able to provide these basic services. Is the State going to do it?

Tower Lakes relies heavily on the Local Government Distributive Fund and the Motor Fuel Tax fund for payment of our monthly expenditures. These funds make up 14% of our general fund. If the State takes these funds---in violation of state statute--- the basic services provided by our village will be severely curtailed.

You must vote against the State's taking of these funds. Not only will our village be unjustly limited in its ability to provide these vital services, but we are confident the state will not provide these services, and we will never get our revenue back from the legislature. This is a BAD IDEA. The State legislature needs to look at its own budget, including benefits it receives, to make cuts.

Very truly yours,

David Lothspeich

From: IML Legislation [Legislation@iml.org]

Sent: Friday, April 15, 2011 4:05 PM

To: IML Legislation

Subject: IML Statehouse Briefing - April 15, 2011

IML STATEHOUSE BRIEFING
“On the ground news and insider information!”
4-15-11

The General Assembly deadline to pass bills out of their chamber of origin is today. The IML will be assembling a comprehensive report on issues that remain alive at the “mid-point” of session that have the potential to affect municipal governments. We will also provide an update early next week about what transpired concerning key issues during deadline week. House and Senate members will conclude business today and return to their legislative districts for spring break. The House is scheduled to return to session on April 26 and the Senate is scheduled to return to session on May 3.

Preserving Local Revenues: The IML Legislative Day on Wednesday, April 13 focused on the need for our membership to engage their legislators in the fight to preserve existing state-collected local government revenues. Legislators will be back in their districts beginning next week. **Now is the time to set up appointments and make phone calls!** [Click here](#) to learn more.

ACTION IS NEEDED IMMEDIATELY TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE STATE-COLLECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVENUES. CONTACT YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS AND URGE THEM TO MAKE FIRM COMMITMENTS THAT THEY WILL NOT VOTE FOR ANY BUDGET PROPOSAL THAT WOULD REDUCE LOCAL REVENUES BY ANY AMOUNT!

If you do not wish to receive information from the Illinois Municipal League via e-mail, please reply to this email - include the words "Please remove from list" along with your name, municipality and email address included in the message.



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2011 Legislative Session

Cities Must Fight to Preserve Local Revenues!

Statehouse Briefings

By [Joe McCoy](#), Senior Legislative Advocate, IML

Agenda Bills

Bill Positions

The fight to protect and preserve state-collected local government revenue is just beginning. Every municipal official must explain to their state legislators what the consequences would be if the General Assembly voted to take away ANY amount of state-collected local government revenue. These contacts must begin **IMMEDIATELY!!!** We need firm commitments from state legislators that they will not reduce critical revenues depended upon by local governments. Please note the "Call to Action" at the conclusion of this article.

Tracked Bills

Fact Sheets & Issue Briefs

Resources

Attendees at the IML Legislative Briefing on April 13 heard a presentation by Deputy Executive Director/General Counsel Roger Huebner about the **severe and unimaginable impact** that further revenue losses would inflict on cities and counties. The following major points concerning state-collected local government income tax revenue (LGDF) were explained to those in attendance:

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- Cities and counties are being asked to "sacrifice" to help the state close a substantial budget deficit. Cities and counties have **already sacrificed** because of natural revenue declines and the actions of the General Assembly and Governor to reduce the local percentage of overall income tax collections from 10% to 6%.
- Prior to the Great Recession of 2008, cities and counties were receiving \$92.02 per resident in income tax distributions. In FY2012, this amount is estimated to drop to \$73 per resident. This is a difference of \$19.02 per resident.
- If the General Assembly and Governor decided to reduce our state-collected income tax revenue by \$300 million, municipalities would immediately lose an additional \$23.40 per resident on top of the \$19.02 that has already been lost during the recession. This totals an estimated \$42.42 in lost revenue per resident in FY2012.
- As part of the income tax increase enacted into law in January, cities and counties saw their percentage of total income tax collections reduced from 10% of the old rate to 6% of the new rate.
- The "opportunity lost" created when the General Assembly and the Governor reduced our income tax distribution to 6% of income tax collections is a staggering \$2.7 billion from FY2011 through FY2015. This is \$2.7 billion that will not be returned to local communities over the next four years.

2010 Post Legislative Session Materials

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1. The End of State-Collected Local Government Revenue?
2. House Committee Votes to Abolish Workers' Compensation Act
3. Amendments Filed Would Affect Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund

[Click here](#) for statistical information about these and potential future revenue losses.

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Following the IML Legislative Briefing, mayors from communities throughout Illinois gathered to hold a press conference and lobby legislators in conjunction with the IML Legislative Day. These mayors described the consequences that would befall municipal governments if state-collected local government revenues were taken down even further. A press release can be [viewed here](#).

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CALL TO ACTION!!!

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The IML is asking that local officials begin to actively engage with their legislators to make them understand the very real consequences of further reductions in state-collected local government revenues. Explain what has been cut and what would be cut in the future from further revenue reductions. **WE NEED SOLID COMMITMENTS FROM LEGISLATORS THAT THEY WILL NOT CUT ANY MONEY THAT MUNICIPALITIES ARE CURRENTLY RECEIVING.** When you speak with your legislators and learn their position on preserving state-collected local government revenues, contact Senior Legislative Advocate [Joe McCoy](#) with what you have learned.



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The End of State-Collected Local Government Revenue?

By **Joe McCoy**, Senior Legislative Advocate, IML
Jonas Harger, IML Legal Intern

The state budget crisis has reached such an unprecedented level that there is a very real danger that state-collected local government revenues could be reduced or even lost altogether. Past years have seen fleeting discussion about reducing state-collected revenues only to see the proposals quickly abandoned. This year the state is very seriously gearing up to take away state-collected local government revenues in the name of "shared sacrifice." The only way to combat the possible loss of these critical revenues is for local officials to actively engage state legislators and the general public. Those that would be affected by the cuts need to fully-understand the impact.

The Groundwork for Cuts to Local Government Revenues is Being Laid

In past years, policy organizations have endorsed reductions in state-collected local government revenues as a means of helping to reduce the state budget deficit. For example, the Governor's Taxpayer Action Board issued a [report](#) in June of 2009. [Click here](#) to read the report's recommendations regarding state-collected local government revenue. The Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago also issued a [report](#) in 2009 that called for cuts to state-collected local government revenue. [Click here](#) for an excerpt from the report.

More recently, the Illinois Policy Institute (IPI) issued a March 15 [report](#) calling for what could be a **total cut in state-collected local government income tax revenue**. Using FY 2009 numbers, this translates to \$1.118 billion withheld from municipalities and counties throughout Illinois! This money belongs to municipalities and counties and is simply collected by the state. It would be the height of irresponsibility if the state elected to take this money away from local government. In a disturbing acknowledgement of how "out of touch" some are concerning budgetary demands and community needs, the IPI report includes the following statement:

*"On balance, most local governments can afford to budget without LGDF assistance."
 (Page 100 of "Budget Solutions 2012")*

The Illinois Senate Republican Caucus seemingly agrees with the IPI's objective to cut revenues that belong to local governments. And the Senate Republican Caucus proposal goes beyond targeting state-collected income tax dollars as part of a budget-balancing "solution." Rather, the Caucus issued a March 17 [report](#) that outlines reductions worth \$300 million across a broad array of state-collected revenue. Included within the discussion is reducing local government money from income taxes, sales taxes, the Motor Fuel Tax, and the Personal Property Replacement Tax. All of these sources together generate essential revenues upon which local governments rely to provide fundamental services that promote the health and safety of the public, pave roads, clean streets, and provide recreational opportunities for children.

Illinois must not be allowed to eliminate its budget deficit by robbing local governments of vital sources of revenue. Local governments are at a particularly high-risk for losing out on state-collected local government revenues because it appears as though some state leaders and policy organizations do not fully comprehend how important these funds actually are to local communities. **It is therefore incumbent on local leaders to make a strong case to the General Assembly and the public as to why these revenues are absolutely necessary to maintain the basic community services that benefit millions of Illinois citizens. This case must be made right now!**

Illinois' "Fiscal Responsibility Report Card"

The Office of the Comptroller offers insightful information concerning the critical importance of state-collected local government revenue. The Comptroller's "[Fiscal Responsibility Report Card](#)," published in 2009, shows

that nearly one-third of municipal revenue outside of Chicago is collected by the state on behalf of municipal governments.

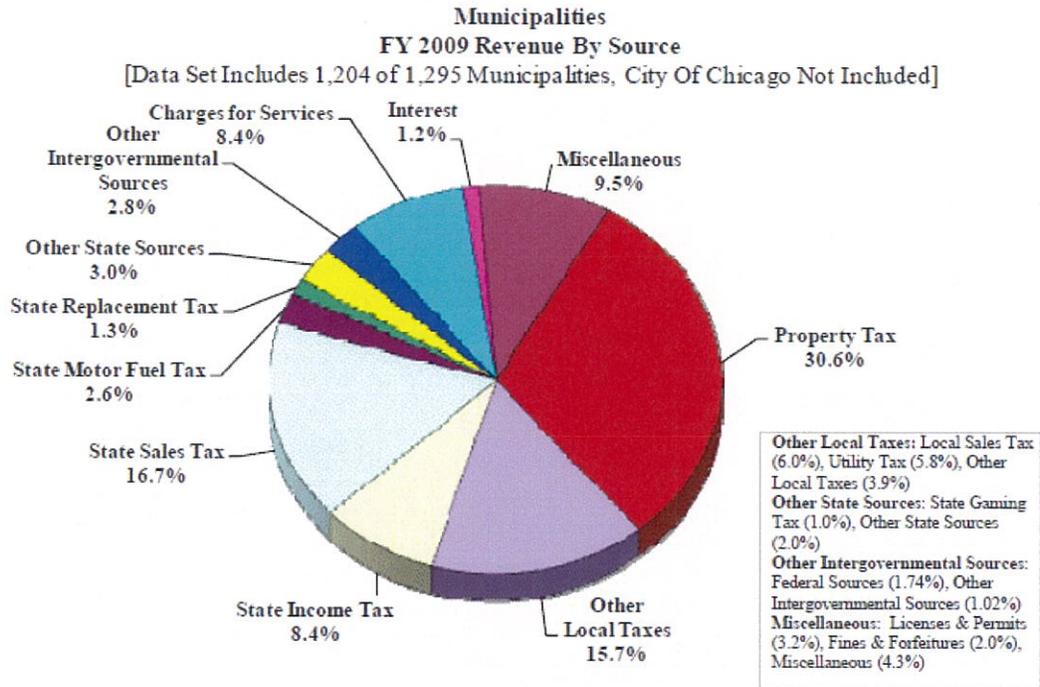
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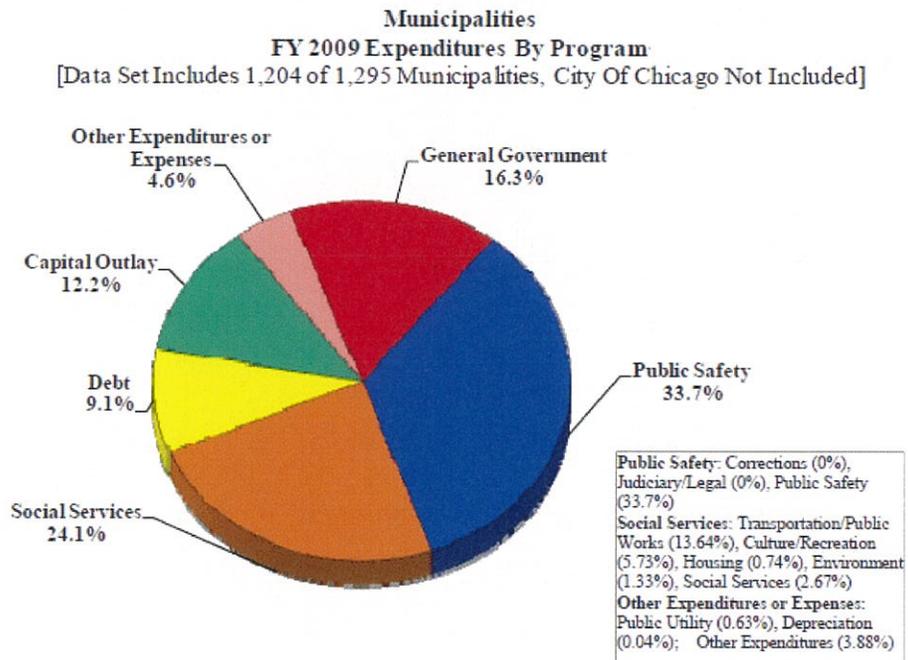
Legislative Section Help



Office 2003 or higher required



This money goes toward the funding of core municipal services. Of the total revenue collected by municipal governments excluding Chicago, 33.7% is spent on public safety while 24.1% is spent on social services. In terms of social services, more than one-half of the money is expended for transportation and public works.



More than half of all municipal revenue is used to fund priorities like police and fire protection, water and sewer services, and baseline social services. Further revenue reductions will result in decreased services, higher incidences of crime, and diminished public health standards.

State-Collected Local Government Revenue Already Declining

State leaders must comprehend that the local share of the state income tax has already been on a steady decline since its peak in municipal fiscal year 2008. In 2008, local governments received \$92.02 per capita as their share of the state income tax. Local governments saw a 1% decrease in the state income tax in 2009 followed by a 12.8% decrease in 2010 netting \$79.38 per capita. The IML forecasts another drop for municipal fiscal year 2011 of 3.3% yielding a per capita income of \$76.75. This number may be inflated due to the recent tax amnesty period. Local governments are already dealing with decreased revenue at a time when demand for services is at an all-time high. These are the core services that people notice every day because they are absolutely necessary for daily living.

Local Officials Must Act Now to Prevent Cuts in Revenues Collected by the State on Behalf of Local Governments!

State leaders often refer to the need for local governments to "sacrifice" in the effort to free the state from the shackles of growing state debt obligations. What state leaders need to realize and accept is that local leaders have been sacrificing for years through painful budget cuts, service cuts, and employee reductions. Illicit raids on state-shared revenues would be doubly-damaging considering that local governments throughout the state have already been cutting back their operations to subsistence levels. Taking state-collected local government revenue in the wake of these already painful reductions would be excessively damaging and would prove harmful to Illinois residents.

We are past the point of conjecture and into discussions about very real cuts to services that allow everyday people to live their lives with an expectation of health, safety, and prosperity. Further cuts in services at the local level beyond those that have already been made would be easily recognizable by Illinoisans and must be avoided at ALL costs.

Municipal officials must **ACT NOW** by expressing firm opposition to any cuts in state-collected local government revenues. Do not wait until the General Assembly and the Governor move further along in the FY2012 budget process. Contact your state legislators and let them know how your community would be affected without any state-collected local government revenue.

Related Stories:

- [Proposals Threaten State-Shared Municipal Revenue \(IML\)](#)
- [From Wagging Finger to 'All Ears,' GOP Enters Budget Negotiations \(Chicago Tribune\)](#)
- [States Pass Budget Pain to Cities \(New York Times\)](#)
- [GOP Senators Propose \\$6.7 Billion in Cuts to Illinois Budget \(Business Week\)](#)
- [Think Tank: 'More Work Needs to Be Done on State Budget Still Billions in the Red' \(Chicago Tribune\)](#)

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2011 Legislative Session

Proposals Threaten State-Collected Local Government Revenues

Statehouse Briefings

By [Joe McCoy](#), Senior Legislative Advocate, IML

Agenda Bills

Proposals to cut state-shared revenue to local governments were floated from two different sources this week. Both the Illinois Policy Institute and the Senate Republican Caucus offered forth budget proposals that outlined a variety of spending reductions to grapple with the state's budget deficit.

Bill Positions

Tracked Bills

In a document released on March 15 and entitled "[Budget Solutions 2012](#)," the Illinois Policy Institute advocates the following:

Fact Sheets & Issue Briefs

"Budget Solutions 2012 recommends that most transfers of general revenue funds be stopped. This would result in a significant reduction to funds transferred into the Local Government Distributive Fund. On balance, most local governments can afford to budget without LGDF assistance. If, however, lawmakers felt that the LGDF should maintain a fund balance above what Budget Solutions 2012 would allow, they could examine replenishing funds from other non-general-revenue sources that are passed on to local governments through antiquated formulas."

Resources

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Two days later, on March 17, the Illinois Senate Republican Caucus released a plan entitled "[Reality Check: A Plan for Reality-Based Budgeting](#)." The Senate Republican Caucus plan also calls for reductions in state-shared local government revenue. Specifically, the report states the following:

Legislative Archives

Public Acts by Year

"Review the over \$6 billion that local governments receive in revenue sharing from the State of Illinois. They receive around 6% of income tax receipts, over half of all gas tax receipts, 20% of sales tax receipts on items other than food and drugs, 100% of sales tax receipts on food and drug purchases, and 100% of revenues from the Personal Property Replacement Tax. A \$300 million reduction represents around 5% of those revenues. This approach has been suggested by many groups including the Governor's Taxpayer Action Board, the Illinois Policy Institute and the Civic Committee. Targeted Savings: \$300 million"

Social Media



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The IML is opposed to ANY reductions in state-shared municipal revenue.

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State-shared revenue is critical for municipal services. The IML believes that the return of these tax dollars to local communities for the purpose of providing public services is the single-most visible and effective return on investment that taxpayers can possibly receive. Local governments provide the core services that are most important and impactful to Illinois residents. Municipalities pave local roads, provide water and sewer services to businesses and residents, offer police and fire protection, provide recreational opportunities, and, as recent history has borne out, clear the snow.

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Furthermore, local governments in general, and municipal governments in particular, have been making responsible budget choices to reduce costs and manage natural revenue reductions during the current economic downturn. Difficult choices and sacrifices have already occurred in communities throughout Illinois.

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It is imperative that local officials contact their state legislators and insist in the strongest possible terms that local government revenue must not be reduced in any way as part of a "solution" to the state budget deficit.

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art helps save homes

County program guides people through foreclosure proceedings

INGER
 .com
 Real estate increasing, officials say are turn-program to mitigate comings — and homes.

The effort in Judge Robert Gibson's courtroom matches struggling homeowners with counselors from the DuPage Homeownership Center. The nonprofit group educates the homeowners about their options and can help them seek loan modifications to avoid foreclosure. Gibson said the pilot

program launched in December after officials recognized several disturbing trends developing in foreclosure court, as more families struggled to keep up with their bills. Among the concerns were rampant reports of largely Hispanic homeowners losing money to Internet scam artists who falsely promised to save

their homes. "It's just pure evil," Gibson said. "You've got people out there whose business model is, 'I'm going to target through bogus ads people who don't speak English very well and are getting foreclosed upon and losing their homes, and

See HOMES on PAGE 6



SCOTT SANDERS/ssanders@daillyherald.com
 Judge Robert Gibson and Chancery Division Presiding Judge Bonnie Wheaton say they hope a new courtroom program will help DuPage County families avoid foreclosure.



AWKS INTO YOFFS

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ATED PRESS ick Sharp n Sunday ed Wings' the United Co. will ncover st round of Game 1 will esday at ncover. hed atop the ce with 117

When suburban day care centers say they can't handle children with disabilities



PAUL T. KUNZLER/pkuzner@daillyherald.com
 Greer Schnaitman, 6, plays with stuffed animals and toys at her St. Charles home with her family. Greer's parents are at odds with the leaders at a local day care center who recently identified Greer as a safety concern at the facility. Here, Greer embraces her favorite, horses and kitties.

No room for special needs?

BY JAMES FULLER
 ifuller@daillyherald.com

Greer Schnaitman doesn't experience the world like most other 6-year-old girls do. She is a child with a host of special needs that cause her to learn and interact with others in different ways. Greer counts ADHD, autism, and bipolar and oppositional defiant disorders among her struggles. She also comes from a family with four children that relies on two paychecks to get by. And now

with a choice she can't afford to make. After more than a year at a St. Charles KinderCare, Greer began leaving the classroom without permission and without adult supervision. Schnaitman said the staff at the day care placed a chair in front of the door and a stop sign to curb the behavior. When it happened again the next day, Schnaitman said the staff told her Greer was no longer welcome at their facility without a one-on-one personal care assis-

can cost \$25 an hour. Stacey Schnaitman found herself one of the many parents of special needs children in between an income rock and a child-care hard place. She is faced with the familiar scenario of being forced to quit her job to stay home with Greer and be without an income she can't afford to lose. "Greer asks me, 'Why don't they like me? I promise I'll be good,'" Schnaitman said. "I want her to be in day care with her siblings and

2 plans to save money

Link, Kotowski pitch ways to consolidate state government

BY KERRY LESTER AND MIKE RIOPEL
 kleston@daillyherald.com
 mriopell@daillyherald.com



Terry Link



Dan Kotowski

Tiny governments across the suburbs would have to prove they're needed or be merged into others. Voters would be able to eliminate certain township positions. Those are two proposals being pitched by suburban lawmakers in Springfield as a way to make local governments more efficient and save money. In a state with more units of government than any in the nation, and in the wake of local elections that saw record low turnout across the West and Northwest suburbs, the proposals are timely — and likely to draw both supporters and staunch opponents. The proposals by Sen. Terry Link of Waukegan and Sen. Dan Kotowski of Park Ridge are likely to receive a strong pushback from some local officials, who argue their roles are vital and necessary. Avon Township Supervisor Sam Yingling supports Kotowski's idea allowing local voters to decide whether to roll some of a township's services, for example, into the county in an effort to save money. But not many of Yingling's counterparts agree, he said. "I have received some constructive criticism from other elected township officials," he said. Link's plan calls for creating a commission to dissolve or merge local governments across the

ties either don't really want to have special needs children in their facility, or they don't know how to care for them.

"Typically, they tell a parent they can't accommodate a child because they can't keep the child or other children safe," Pfister said.

The question I've always wanted an answer to is how much do they have to try? What do they have to do before they say we can't have your child here? Do they have to look into getting some training? Do they have to set up their rooms differently? It's heartbreaking for a parent and a child when this happens."

Pfister said most children with special needs, like autism, just need structure and boundaries to fit in with other children. An autistic child trying to leave a classroom is very common, Pfister said, because a child care facility can be very loud and overstimulating for them.

A sign by a door with a child's name that just says what time of the day the child is allowed to walk out the door can often be an easy solution to the problem, she said.

"That way the child knows that leaving the classroom is

for a special-needs child. Anna McMonigal, disability services coordinator for Knowledge Universe, which owns KinderCare, said it's a rare situation that a parent is told their child can't be at a KinderCare facility without a one-on-one aide. But it does happen.

"When a child is endangering their own safety or the safety of others, we may require an aide," McMonigal said. "Requiring an aide is only done in extreme situations and as a last resort."

Asked for an example of a severe situation, McMonigal said a child leaving a classroom would qualify.

Getting help

The Americans with Disabilities Act prevents child care facilities from dismissing or not accepting children solely because they have special needs. The law requires centers to "make reasonable modifications" to their policies and practices to accommodate a special-needs child. The law doesn't define what "reasonable" means.

That's where people like Kelly Lopresti come in.

Lopresti is the director of

"A lot of other child care providers have a lot of fear because they aren't familiar with or educated on these special needs," Lopresti said. "A lot of centers assume a child needs a one-on-one care assistant, but nobody has budgets like that anymore."

Lopresti said what she typically finds is that a child needs help with eating during meals or some other specific portion of the day, but not the full day.

"Teachers are required to sit at tables with kids during meals anyway," Lopresti said. "But if a child needs help eating, they think of that as one-on-one care. It's not. But then parents are told they need an assistant. Who can afford to pay \$250 a week for child care plus pay someone an hourly rate to be an assistant?"

Thus begins the path to a child being dismissed from a facility or suddenly prevented from enrolling in the first place, Lopresti said.

"It's like they put a wall up to these kids," she said. "I have so many families who call me crying, devastated, because a facility told them they can take their child, but then, when they say they have a child with special needs, suddenly the

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Save: Some say it's impossible for Illinois voters to be truly informed

Continued from Page 1

state. His bipartisan commission would force all local governments to come forward and prove their worth.

"They would have to sell their case," Link said.

Then, the commission would create a statewide plan to eliminate or consolidate governments that lawmakers would have to approve — or not — without tweaking.

That way, Link says, individual lawmakers couldn't change the plan to exempt local governments in their areas.

"Next thing you know, we're not voting on anything," he said.

Link's plan could get a hearing this week.

Meanwhile, Kotowski, who is chairman of the Senate appropriations committee, plans to file legislation that would allow certain township positions to be eliminated by referendum.

"There's a duplication of services across the board," he said. "We need to look at all aspects

of township government to reduce duplications and save taxpayers money."

Kotowski said it would put more power "in the hands of voters."

Last week's election was notable in both the number of uncontested races and in the record low turnout by voters.

Some experts suggest that with so many governmental units, it's a near-impossible task for voters to learn as much as they need to make informed decisions about so many candidates.

And then there's the lack of interest in serving on these local governments board, as seen in the number of uncontested races.

A Daily Herald analysis of the 528 local races in last Tuesday's municipal election in Northwest suburban Cook and Lake, DuPage, Kane and McHenry counties found only 238 were contested.

About 50 percent of school and municipal board positions were contested. But four

of five regional office of education seats were uncontested, as were 47 of 70 library boards, 16 of 24 fire protection districts, and 49 of 74 park districts.

And few voters came out to cast ballots.

DuPage County saw 16.4 percent turnout — its lowest in municipal election history.

Suburban Cook County turnout also was a record low at 16 percent, down from 20.8 percent in 2009 and 17.2 percent in 2007.

In Kane County, just 12.4 percent of registered voters came out, the lowest mark in at least 24 years for a nonpartisan, consolidated election. And in McHenry County, just 12.5 percent of registered voters went to the polls, also a record low.

"People just didn't get excited for local races, and they probably should. The outcome of the race will affect taxes for a long time," said Kane County Clerk Jack Cunningham said.



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Lack of interest hurting local government

BY SUSAN SARKAUSKAS
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What if no one wants to step up and lead a town?

Or a library district, park district or fire district?

Governments throughout the suburbs are facing that problem after last Tuesday's election. Not only was voter turnout low, but in some places candidates didn't show up either.

Why?

"It is time-consuming; pay, if there is pay, is lousy; and there is very little recognition," said Paul Green, political science professor at Roosevelt University and once a township supervisor.

Serving as alderman means spending time away from family to attend one or two meetings a week, and "there are people who call you the dreaded 'p' word — politician," Green said. "Serving is a tremendous responsibility, including big spending decisions."

Compounding the problem is the large number of governments Illinois has, he said.

The example

Take Maple Park. The small Kane County community (population 1,310) had three open positions



RICK WEST/rwest@dailyherald.com
The Maple Park Civic Center houses the village offices and the Maple Park Library. Both government bodies' boards need people to fill vacancies.

on its village board, and the Maple Park Library District had three 6-year positions and two 2-year positions available in Tuesday's election. But only one person ran for village board, and nobody ran for the library posts.

That means on the six-member village board, one-third of its members will be appointed by the village president rather than selected by the people.

Village President Kathleen Curtis said five people have applied for the positions, the younger folks, she tells

which she advertised in local newspapers and on the village website as soon as she knew no one was running.

"Usually there are enough people who come forth (on the ballot) to do the work," she said. She and village trustees will interview the applicants, and she will appoint the two at the board's May meeting.

Curtis said the village skew to two groups: Senior citizens and young couples with children. When she approaches the younger folks, she tells

them that they are the ones who will benefit from improvements the village is making.

But they tell her they are too busy to serve, often with both parents working outside the home. What free time they do have is spent volunteering for their children's activities, such as baseball leagues.

The issue is exacerbated by the size of the town, according to Curtis. Maple Park has only five employees and one is part time. That means trustees end up having to do some of

the administrative work that would normally be handled by staff in larger towns.

Maple Park Library Director Kimberly Martin has begged — on the library's Facebook page, in newspapers and in person for the last year — to get replacements for a trustee who died and another who resigned due to illness.

"I think people are afraid it is a huge time commitment or that it might be difficult," Martin said. "Being responsible for decisions is intimidating."

The library district, while larger than the town, is still small.

"You just keep running into the same people over and over (volunteering for other groups). People get burned out," Martin said.

Open-office solution

Maple Park isn't alone in facing these problems.

• In nearby Big Rock, there are two board vacancies to be filled by appointment.

• Nobody wanted to be the Rolling Meadows city clerk.

• Elk Grove Township Elementary District 59 — which has 6,219 students — will be short a trustee.

• The village boards in Burlington and Sleepy Hollow each will be short one trustee.

• The Big Rock, Burlington

and Inverness park districts have two open chairs apiece. The South Barrington park board needs another person.

• The Dundee Township library board will be down one trustee. The Sugar Grove library board will be down two trustees. The Batavia library also finds itself one member short of a full board.

• The Hampshire Fire Protection District needs another person.

Green had one idea to solve the issue: Make it so you we need fewer officials by eliminating single-interest units of local government, such as library and mosquito abatement districts.

Instead, turn responsibility for their operations over to general-purpose governments like cities, townships and counties, he said.

Those officials are usually better compensated, which might attract more candidates, and you would need fewer of them, he said. The downside some see to that is that it consolidates power in fewer hands.

"The amazing thing in Illinois (with its thousands of governments) ... is that so many people are willing to do this, to serve their community," Green said.

"There should be a lot more respect for these people."

Catching some air

GREAT LAKES

needs off the waiting lists. There just aren't enough options out there."

Kelly Lopresti, director of The Lily Garden Child Care Center, on options for families with special needs children