

June 03, 2009 – Legislative Update

I'm returning to the District after a tough fight in Springfield to develop an equitable, balanced budget. We couldn't reach consensus, however. Nonetheless, I am glad to report that we were able to make measurable strides to benefit the 38th District, the Southland region, and the State of Illinois.

Talk about equity and beating City Hall (literally and figuratively). **Section 41** of the Metropolitan Transit Act of 1945 (which created the CTA), was amended to bring about more fairness to persons injured by a CTA accident. I met Mrs. Merle Huckabee a little over two years ago. She is a resident of Hazel Crest and was critically injured in a CTA accident a number of years ago. Due to the Section 41 technicality, CTA was able to get her case considered null and void. NBC 5 did an expose highlighting Mrs. Huckabee's plight and the legislation in Springfield that I spearheaded on March 11, 2009. In the video expose, Mrs. Huckabee stated, "People need a fair chance to have a fair fight."

It is important to note that Mrs. Huckabee will not benefit in anyway as a result of this legislation. Her courage, faith and tenacity served as an inspiration to fight this fight on her behalf. Thanks to Senate sponsor Ira Silverstein and the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association who also fought the good fight. Governor Quinn signed this legislation on June 1, 2009. Public Act 96-0012 provides that "a civil action against the CTA for an injury to one's person must be commenced within one year from the date the cause of action accrues. Deletes provisions requiring any person that is about to commence a civil action in any court against the Authority to provide written notice to the Authority. Deletes provisions requiring the Authority to furnish a copy of this Section to any person that has notified the Authority that he or she has a cause of action."

[The link to the NBC 5 news story can be found here.](#)

HB2425 – this piece of legislation sponsored by myself and Sen. Maggie Crotty would expand the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District boundaries to the **Crawford Countryside** area of unincorporated Rich Township. Forget the legalese, it's about a 225 home area between Matteson and Richton Park that will be hooked into the MWRD for wastewater service. It is now on the Governors' desk awaiting signature. Thanks to the residents for passing a successful referendum.



Tickets are now available for my upcoming **Jazz In The Park For Charity 2009**. By clicking on the site, you can find the numerous not for profit organizations which are participating as a partner.

<http://www.jazzintheparkforcharity.com>

These organizations are also selling tickets. All of the profits go to benefit the cooperating charitable groups. I even got a House Resolution passed honoring the event. It is House Resolution 502.

In general, the **Southland Legislative Caucus** and myself scored in terms of bringing back millions of dollars to the area through local capital initiatives and other "big ticket" projects like the Third Airport and the I57/I294 interchange. I'll have more on these dollars in my next e-mail blast, coming soon.

Finally, the fight for **education funding reform** continues in Springfield. Representative David Miller and Senator Meeks worked in collaboration, along with Senate President John Cullerton to bring HB0174 for a vote before the General Assembly. Both Representative Miller and Senator Meeks did a good job in bringing education funding back on the table during the budget negotiations. The Southland Reps pulled all kinds of strings to even get this bill heard in committee.

Sitting in Room 114 was a surreal moment; years of work coming to fruition. With Representative Will Davis subbing as the Chair of the Appropriations for Elementary and Secondary Education Committee, I was listening to Representative Miller testify alongside Governor Quinn about the importance of the bill. I voted in support of the legislation because I believed it would provide property tax relief to many in the south suburbs. It would also address education funding inequities across the state. It passed out of committee on a partisan vote. Sadly however, the bill did not go to the House floor. A caucus roll call showed that it had only about 35 Democratic votes in favor. Quinn's bill, SB2252, a decent bill, also lost on a 42 aye, 72 nay, 2 present vote. The so-called maintenance or "doomsday budget" passed 62-52-4 in the House, with a 34-25 concurrence in the Senate. I voted no. Hopefully, the Governor and the legislative leaders will bring sanity to the budget process and bring a compromise bill that you would want me to vote for. Thanks for your support; I'll be in touch again soon.