



The Art of Compromise is Needed Now in Illinois

by Ellen Krohne

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Illinois is proud of our connection to Abraham Lincoln. His leadership brought our country through its darkest days of the Civil War and preserved the nation. I wonder what Lincoln would think of the current state of Illinois and what guidance his leadership would provide.

As our beloved state of Illinois approaches the start of its sixth month without a budget, we must call to action our elected officials. Our state institutions of higher education are

experiencing drastic budget cuts, local municipalities are not receiving allocations due and basic services to our most vulnerable citizens in need are being withheld. Costly delays are occurring on construction projects, including President Lincoln's Tomb.

On the economic development front, incentives used to lure new businesses have been suspended. Surrounding states are letting prospects know that Illinois cannot be trusted to fulfill its promises. Business owners shake their heads and wonder what can be done and how to manage in this state of economic risk. This level of uncertainty is an impediment to economic growth.

Lincoln said, "You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today". It is past time for our elected leaders to accept responsibility and do their part of resolve this critical issue.

Everyone agrees that to restore our state we must pass a balanced budget, fix the pension issues and pay our bills on time. It is generally agreed some reforms are needed to be competitive. And, all recognize that some pain is needed to achieve these difficult goals. So on these principles, there is agreement. It is in how we accomplish restoring our state that there is disagreement.

Lincoln gave us great example of the art of compromise. He stuck to his principles and rejected the compromises which would have split the nation, with a free north and slavery south. And, he made many compromises, promises and horse trades to gain the votes necessary to pass the 13th amendment to the United States Constitution abolishing slavery. Lincoln's leadership can serve as a guide; reminding our legislators to never compromise on principles, but rather, to compromise skillfully on matters of preference.

In Springfield today the stalemate that has Illinois at the lowest credit ratings in the nation and in a state of demise, not growth, is not about principles, since there is broad agreement on what needs to be done; it is on preference of how it is accomplished. In an argument of preference, compromise can, and should, be found.

We the 215 leaders at the Leadership Council Southwestern Illinois ask our elected officials throughout the state, of all parties and positions in Springfield, to come to the table, find that compromise and find it now. There is middle ground to be found in both budget reductions and revenue increases, as well as in suggested reforms. Please follow the example of Lincoln, find a compromise as to how to first pass a budget, then restore our state, and end these dark days of Illinois history.

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