

SCHOOLS AT FOREFRONT: Governor, House, Senate reach agreement on budget, Haine, Beiser comment

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SPRINGFIELD - A budget agreement was finally reached in Springfield that went through both the House of Representatives, the Senate and was signed by **Gov. Bruce Rauner** on Thursday that keeps schools afloat for the school year and will provide funding for human services organizations and government through the end of the calendar year.

Area legislators **Sen. William Haine, D-Alton**, and **Rep. Dan Beiser, D-Alton**, were both happy to see a stopgap compromise reached, but both know much work is ahead for legislators in regard to the budget.

Shortly after the bill cleared the House, **Democratic Speaker Michael Madigan** blasted his chief nemesis, **Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner**.

"We have seen with previous successful budget efforts that we can come together, achieve compromise and pass a budget when the governor's demands relative to his personal agenda that hurts families are dropped," Madigan said. "That happened again today."

Rauner issued praise for **Democratic Senate President John Cullerton** for his "flexibility" and "creativity" in the tricky negotiations. Left out of the accolades was Madigan.

Despite claims the budget deal would help build trust in months ahead, Rauner vowed he was not letting go of the economic agenda he's made a condition of a more permanent budget deal. Madigan maintained Democrats also stand their ground, meaning the battle is not yet over.

Sen. Haine said another positive of the budget is it will keep much-needed state construction projects going.

Haine, who supported the measure, said he is happy to find compromise in this legislation.

"What we passed today will help keep jobs in the Metro East by ensuring IDOT has the resources to keep its road construction projects going," Haine said. "But that's not the only win we had today. This legislation will provide funding for human services agencies; Senior Service Plus, IMPACT CIL and St. John's Community Care will finally receive some of the relief they need to keep their doors open and serve seniors and those with disabilities."

The measure also contains Capital Development Board projects, including renovations for the old science building at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and improvements to residential buildings at the Alton Mental Health center.

"This is great. I have been a longtime supporter of SIUE and the Alton Mental Health Center, and I will continue to help bring similar projects to my district," Haine added.

Rep. Dan Beiser said the school portion of the budget was by far one of the most important pieces of the puzzle.

“This will give security for parents and students to know the school year will progress in normal fashion, and the human service organizations will receive funding through the end of the year. It is something I think should have happened before the fiscal year ended today. I guess it is not good to dwell in the past, but move forward. We have more work to be done by the end of the calendar year and we have to keep that thought.”