



2017 Special Session Address

June 21 2017 8:32 AM

Good evening,

Thank you for joining us here in the historic Old State Capitol in Springfield.

It was here in Representative Hall that Abraham Lincoln delivered a speech that would change the course of history, where he proclaimed: “a House divided against itself cannot stand.”

Our history reminds us of our state’s great capacity for change – and for our limitless potential when those elected by the people put the people’s interests ahead of all else.

Right now, our state is in real crisis – and the actions we take in the days ahead will determine how history remembers us. We can all do better. We **MUST** all do better for the citizens of Illinois.

We’ve asked the General Assembly to come together in a special session for the next 10 days – not as Democrats and Republicans – but as leaders who share bipartisan concern for our state’s future.

We must agree on a balanced budget plan, and get it to my desk before the end of the state’s fiscal year – one week from Friday.

Last week, we reviewed a compromise budget plan that I can sign – one that we can all support. It moves us to middle ground on key issues. It is truly balanced. It funds schools, higher education, and human services. It provides a real path to property tax reduction.

The plan also stands tall for fundamentals. Spending reductions. Limits on expenses. Debt reduction. And term limits on legislative leaders and statewide officeholders, including the Governor.

If we can agree to pass it, this plan will send a message across our state and around the nation that we are serious about making Illinois a more attractive destination for investment, new businesses, and new jobs.

If we can agree to pass it, we will stop this unnecessary crisis.

Failure to act is not an option. Failure to act may cause permanent damage to our state that will take years to overcome.

Over the next 10 days, we have an opportunity to change the State of Illinois for the better. To give our people a future they can believe in. To give job creators a reason to come, and families a reason to stay.

We CAN reach an agreement. After all, we share a common mission. We seek to achieve a greater good, to create a better life for our children and grandchildren here in Illinois.

The proposals before us represent a common-sense compromise to put us on a better path.

So, on the eve of what may become one of the most important legislative sessions in Illinois history, we're asking the General Assembly to do what those who came before us did that changed the course of history: have the courage to dare to do what is right ... to act for the people.

And together, we will create a brighter future for every family across Illinois.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless our beloved State of Illinois. And God bless the United States of America.