

Several Respond To Gov. Pritzker's State Of The State

by Submitted by State Officials
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These are responses to Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker's State of the State address.

Democratic Party of Illinois Statement on Governor JB Pritzker's Address

SPRINGFIELD — Following Governor JB Pritzker's annual State of the State and Budget Address, Democratic Party of Illinois Chair Lisa Hernandez released the following statement:

“Building on five years of fiscal progress and responsibility, Governor JB Pritzker once again laid out a positive vision for our state that invests in education, health care, infrastructure, public safety, and human services in his State of the State and Budget Address. Democrats across the state will work together to continue bolstering our finances while investing in budget priorities that move Illinois forward.

Governor Pritzker, Comptroller Susana Mendoza, Treasurer Mike Frerichs, and Democrats in the General Assembly have put Illinois' finances back on track over the past five years, with nine credit rating upgrades, five balanced budgets, an eliminated bill backlog, and over \$2 billion invested in our Rainy Day Fund. Democrats continue to prove their commitment to uplifting Illinois' working families and delivering real progress for all Illinoisans,” said DPI Chair Lisa Hernandez.

State Representative Kevin Schmidt Releases Statement Following State of the State and Budget Address

Today, the Governor delivered his State of the State and Budget Address. Following the largest budget proposal in state history, Rep. Schmidt released the following statement:

“Instead of looking out for our own citizens, the Governor is focusing on funding for migrants. The most vulnerable citizens of Illinois are paying the price for his careless overspending. We need a budget that's fair, responsible, and puts Illinoisans first for a stable future. If we continue to operate on unrealistic budgets that aren't addressing the needs of our own citizens, Illinoisans will hurt for it. I will do everything in my power to fight for a budget that will serve the people of our great state.”

Rep. Schmidt proudly serves the people of the 115th District.

Rep. Amy Elik's Statement on Governor Pritzker's Budget Address

Illinois Governor JB Pritzker presented his annual budget address to the General Assembly today. House Republican Caucus Deputy Budgeteer, State Representative Amy Elik (R-Alton) issued the following statement after the governor's budget proposal:

“The budget proposed spends \$2.29 billion more than last year while increasing taxes on businesses. The people I represent don't appreciate seeing their tax dollars spent on enticing undocumented immigrants to come to Illinois for housing and Cadillac healthcare. Now that Governor Pritzker presented his budget proposal to lawmakers, it's time for the House and Senate to work together on a budget that reflects the priorities of the taxpayers we represent. I want to see us reach an agreement this year on a budget that is balanced without any tax hikes, eliminates Cadillac health benefits for non-citizens, and provides tax relief for families.”

IARF: New Budget Proposal Does Not Include Needed Investments in Disability Services

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, representing community providers of services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and serious mental illnesses, today issued the following statement after Gov. Pritzker presented his 2025 state budget proposal:

“We appreciate the Governor and his administration working with the disability community and ultimately deciding not to pursue a proposed decrease in hours for Direct Service Professionals (DSP) in the proposed budget, an action that would have had severe consequences for the many people our members serve. It's clear through communications with individuals with disabilities, frontline staff, disability providers, and legislators, they understood that decision would have taken Illinois backwards after our recent progress to better fund services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

With this decision in mind, and while the Administration is simultaneously seeking to exit the Ligas Consent Decree and proposing to increase state revenues, we are deeply concerned that the Governor's budget proposal does not include any increases in wage rates for DSPs. We do not see a path to exiting the consent decree, of which the state has been out of compliance since 2017, without minimally achieving full funding of the Guidehouse rate study, which indicated higher wages and benefits for frontline staff as its top priority.

Disability service providers throughout Illinois continue to face serious pressures and obstacles to attracting DSP workers to provide services, including additional increases

in the minimum wage this year and next to \$15 an hour on January 1, 2025. Regrettably, the proposed budget's lack of a DSP wage rate increase represents a significant step backwards in our ability to provide competitive wages and benefits for frontline staff.

This spring, with the leadership of Representative Michelle Mussman and Senator Karina Villa, we will pursue an increase in DSP wages of \$3 an hour, to help us stay ahead of these pressures and put us more in line with the progress envisioned by the Guidehouse study two years ago.

We hope the Governor and Legislature will recognize the ongoing struggles of service providers and support this wage increase in the final budget later this spring.”

Josh Evans
President and CEO
Illinois Association of Rehabilitation Facilities
Springfield

Belt: Proposed budget invests in communities, prioritizes public safety and education

State Senator Christopher Belt (D-Swansea) released the following statement regarding the governor's Fiscal Year 2025 budget address Wednesday:

“The governor's proposed budget is a good step in ongoing budget discussions and includes funding for many key components important to our community.

“I appreciate that violence prevention and public safety remain a priority in the governor's proposal this year. It is crucial we continue to invest our communities, specifically those with limited resources, so we can reduce crime and keep our neighborhoods safe. As the chair of the Senate Appropriations - Public Safety and Infrastructure Committee, it is my duty to ensure we prioritize funding in these areas.

“Education at all levels was another big priority in the proposal, which is always good to see. Our children and young adults are the future of this state and it is essential to keep putting money into our education system.

“The \$10 million increase in additional funding for the Illinois Grocery Initiative was another big win in today's address. Fighting food insecurity has remained a top priority of mine, and this will ensure residents have access to fresh, affordable food.”

“The proposed budget sets a foundation for legislators to further negotiate a final plan over the next few months. I’m looking forward to putting in the effort to ensure our community’s needs are prioritized in this year’s budget.”