

# Hoffman supported funding for essential state services

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BELLEVILLE – State Rep. Jay Hoffman, D-Swansea, supported an essential services budget on Wednesday that would have provided short-term funding for seniors, veterans, childcare, disability and public safety programs amid intense negotiations over the state budget.

“Whatever our party or position on certain issues, we should all agree that essential services remain accessible to those who need them,” Hoffman said. “A government shutdown would cast a cloud of uncertainty over community care programs for seniors, childcare services for low-income parents and salaries for state police officers. If funding is not continued, many in our community would stop receiving the essential services they rely on.”

House Bill 4190 would have provided \$2.3 billion to fund essential services during the month of July, while negotiations over the Fiscal Year 2016 budget continue. Funding in the proposal included \$82.5 million to the Department on Aging for the community care program, \$3.7 million to the Department of Veterans’ Affairs for veteran home services, \$93.7 million to the Department of Human Services for childcare subsidies, \$637,500 to the Department of Military Affairs for National Guard salaries and \$12.6 million to the State Police for state trooper salaries. Without funding these departments will not be able to pay employees or provide services.

Belleville Mayor Mark Eckert appeared before the members of the House of Representatives to discuss the impact a state government shutdown will have on local governments and urged legislators to support a budget that fully funds the state Local Government Distributive Fund, which allows local governments to provide essential services for their communities, such as those provided by police and fire departments.

“A government shutdown will result in the discontinuation of several projects for our local parks and roads and will send the wrong message to businesses looking to move to Illinois,” Eckert said. “It is essential that the state pass a responsible budget that fully funds the Local Government Distributive Fund so that communities are able to fund critical services, such as those provide by police and fire departments.”