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**Bigger, Bolder Tax Incentive Passes in Springfield:
Tax Credit Upped to 30%, Sunset Clause Removed**

It's a great day to be a Chicago filmmaker.

In a remarkable turn of events, the Illinois General Assembly almost unanimously passed an enhanced film and television production tax credit Thursday afternoon. The tax credit has been increased from 20 percent to a whopping 30 percent. Just as importantly, the incentive's sunset clause, which had required the bill to be renewed every single year (basically, it's an expiration date), has been removed.

What does this new incentive package mean for the Illinois and Chicago film industry? The increase to 30 percent vaults Illinois up the ranks in the highly competitive interstate battle for attracting film and television production. The new bill serves as a direct response to recent tax credit enhancements in Michigan and Wisconsin, which went into effect earlier this past January and subsequently skyrocketed production in their respective regions. Meanwhile, with the removal of the sunset clause, companies interested in building the infrastructure of the Illinois film industry now have the security that this tax incentive isn't going away. And those studios looking at Chicago for their next television series can rest assured these financial benefits will be in place long after Season One (or Twelve).

To qualify, minimum Illinois film and television production spending would have to be greater than \$100,000 and minimum Illinois commercial production spending would have to be greater than \$50,000.

Once the bill is signed by Governor Blagojevich, you can see it for yourself on the Illinois Production Alliance website at www.IllinoisProduction.org. By the way, are you a member of the IPA? If you're shaking your head right now, just reach into your pocket, take out your credit card and jump over to www.IllinoisProduction.org this instant. The IPA is a big reason why the Illinois film industry just got a whole lot more exciting and it's imperative that every single one of us supports the IPA with our membership.

Mike McNamara is the Co-Founder and Director of The Midwest Independent Film Festival, www.midwestfilm.org. Mike pays his rent as an actor in Chicago in theatre, commercials, television and film.