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**Illinois is back in business!
30% incentives bill passed- Sunset Clause gone forever**

"I am elated!" said Local 475's Mark Hogan, exulting over the virtually unanimous state legislature's passage of the 30% filmmakers' tax incentives Thursday, and how it will reignite Illinois' film production industry.

Passage of Senate bill #1981 was so overwhelmingly fast that the IPA legislative committee and other filmmakers who went to Springfield are still pinching themselves to make sure it really happened.

But that it did! In the space of just a few hours, the House voted 108-2 and the Senate, 52-0 to approve the bill and making it veto proof.

The bill wended its way swiftly through the legislature. The House read it into the record at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, shot it over to the Senate committee where it was passed without opposition, and onto the Senate floor, where the vote took place at 2:45 p.m.

The tax incentives were increased from the 20% of the past three years to a competitively healthy 30%.

Equally gratifying was the elimination of the burdensome one-year-at-a time Sunset Clause, which now clears the way for Illinois filmmaking to go forward without having to stop every Dec. 31 and wait for annual January renewal.

With the help of John Conli, president of the Teamsters Joint Council 25, "We were able to convince the legislature that the incentives were not only good for the film industry, but for the entire state by creating new good-paying jobs," Hogan said.

Last year, the incentive created 26,500 jobs and pumped around \$155 million directly into the Illinois economy. "We are looking forward to tripling that number in the next several years," he added.

Now the bill awaits the signature of Gov. Blagojevich, a consistent supporter of the tax credit and the state film industry, before the end of the year.

Incentives usher in a new era of state filmmaking

"This is certainly the start of a new golden era for Illinois film production," said IPA president Lars Ullberg, who was in Springfield with members of the IPA legislative committee: SAG/AFTRA's Eileen Willenborg, DGA's Dan Moore, the Teamsters' Jeff Crabtree and Hogan.

"The bigger incentives put us up there with the best in the business. They return the state to a level where we can compete fairly. In a fair race no one can beat us," Ullberg said.

The Illinois Production Alliance is the only state organization that supports and funds lobbying efforts to provide incentives that enables Illinois to compete in what Ullberg calls "the incentives arm race" among 37 other states fighting for the economic benefits of film production.

For many years, IPA has paid for the services of IGCG, a Chicago-based lobbying firm.

Sen. Rickey Hendon (D) again sponsored the bill, as he had done since their inception three years ago, and Rep. Frank Mautino (R.) was the first-time House sponsor. Rep. Ken Dunkin (D) had stepped aside to allow the primary sponsorship to change.

By doing so, said Ullberg, “Rep. Dunkin let the benefits to the state outweigh the politics.”

The IPA is looking forward to “a focus on long range plans, said Willenborg, who represents around 5,500 members in the two talent unions. “We can work on investor and infrastructure credits to convince LaSalle Street to put their money where their mouths are and get behind the support of a local, indigenous film industry.

“This is just the beginning. A lot of collective effort went into this victory,” Willenborg continued. “IPA has matured as an entity, through good and bad days, and we always kept our eye on the prize,” as the new incentives clearly prove.

Ullberg also thanked “a lot of deserving people who worked so diligently for a long time to make this happen. It’s a sign that the industry can accomplish great things by working together.”