

Illinois Commission on the Elimination of Poverty

2013 Legislative Agenda

Current as of January, 2013

Leadership Agenda

The Poverty Commission opposes cuts to programs which have a significant role in lifting individuals and families out of poverty and supports eliminating disproportionate cuts to programs and services that serve the most vulnerable – the 7% of Illinoisans experiencing extreme poverty.

Supportive Agenda

Increase the Minimum Wage

Bill Synopsis: SB1565 amends the Minimum Wage Law and provides for fewer limitations on the definition of "employee." The bill provides a procedure for increasing the minimum wage annually to restore the minimum wage to its historic level and thereafter increases the minimum wage by the increase in the cost of living during the preceding year.

Relevant Recommendations: Improve workplace compensation by increasing minimum/living wage and benefit standards.

Domestic Workers Bill of Rights

Bill Synopsis: Establishes the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights. Domestic workers have historically been exempted from laws governing the rights afforded to other workers - decent wages, a safe and healthy workplace, workers compensation, and other basic labor protections. The bill provides a set of workplace and benefit standards and removes the domestic worker exclusion from the Minimum Wage Act, the Human Rights Act, and the Wages of Women and Minors Act.

Relevant Recommendations: Improve workplace compensation by increasing minimum/living wage and benefit standards. Eliminate categories of low wage workers not covered by minimum wage. Increase standards and regulations of staffing agencies, protecting domestic/temporary/migrant workers from abuses and exploitation.

State Employment Application – “Ban the Box”

Bill Synopsis: Provides that, subject to an exception concerning a disqualifying offense, an application for State employment may not contain any question as to whether the applicant was convicted of or placed on supervision for a criminal offense. Except as otherwise required by State or federal law, a State agency is not prohibited from requiring an applicant to complete a release form granting the applicant's permission to conduct a background check; the background check release form and any form other than an initial application form may inquire as to the applicant's criminal conviction history; and a background check release form authorizing an inquiry into an applicant's criminal background may not be required of an applicant until after the applicant has been interviewed for, or conditionally offered, a position.

Relevant Recommendations: Adopt a policy to “Ban the Box,” also termed “Move the Box,” which prohibits state job applications from asking if an individual has a criminal background, and use the state’s leadership to encourage and promote the hiring of individuals with criminal backgrounds.

Illinois Automatic IRA Act

Bill Synopsis: Creates the Illinois Automatic IRA Program Act, a Program shall be administered by the State Treasurer. The bills allow employees of certain employers that have not offered a qualified retirement plan for 2 years to set aside a percentage of their wages to be deposited into an IRA trust fund administered by the State Treasurer's office.

Relevant Recommendations: Improve workplace compensation by increasing minimum/living wage and benefit standards.

Medicaid Expansion

Bill Synopsis: Will enable Illinois to receive **\$4.6 billion in federal funding** , , from 2014 – 2016, to provide healthcare for 342,000 uninsured, low-income adults without dependent children.

Relevant Recommendation: Support implementation of expanded Medicaid coverage.

Health Insurance Exchange

Bill Synopsis: Illinois sets up a State-based Health Insurance Exchange.

Relevant Recommendation: Support implantation of expanded Medicaid coverage.

SMART Act Trailer Bill

Bill Synopsis: Technical language fixes and Restoration of some cuts made in FY2013 SMART Act.

Relevant Recommendation: Support implantation of expanded Medicaid coverage.

Ensuring Success in Schools

Bill Synopsis: Students who are parents, expectant parents, or the victims of domestic or sexual violence face barriers to school success and school completion. The bill amends the School Code to include provisions that ensure the health, safety, and academic success of elementary and secondary students who are parents, expectant parents, or victims of domestic or sexual violence. The bill is based upon the recommendations of the Ensuring Success in School Task Force's report to the Illinois General Assembly, submitted in June 2010 (<http://www.povertylaw.org/advocacy/women-and-family/essa-task-force/essa-task-force-report>). Provisions include expanding what constitutes a "valid cause" for absences to include students' pregnancy-related and parenting responsibilities-related absences and absences for circumstances related to domestic or sexual violence; accommodations for students to ensure their health and safety in school; confidentiality protocols; and "specially trained personnel"—a "go-to" person for confidential guidance and referrals for students, teachers and other school personnel when issues related to this student population arises. The bill also amends the Student Records Act regarding the release of information related to a student's status as a parent, expectant parent, or victim of domestic or sexual violence.

Relevant Principle: Ensure equal access to quality education and training.

Criminal ID - Felony Sealing

Bill Synopsis: expands eligibility for the sealing of non-violent felony offense records, from the current number of just three eligible offenses. The most common offenses that would become eligible under this new legislation include: theft, forgery, retail theft, possession with intent, and burglary. This bill passed out of the State Government Administration Committee on Thursday, March 8, 2012.

Relevant Recommendation: Adopt a policy to "Ban the Box," also termed "Move the Box," which prohibits state job applications from asking if an individual has a criminal background, and use the state's leadership to encourage and promote the hiring of individuals with criminal backgrounds.

Illinois Human Rights Act - Housing

Bill Synopsis: Amends the Real Estate Transactions Article of the Illinois Human Rights Act. Provides that it is a civil rights violation to refuse to sell, rent, or otherwise make unavailable or deny, or to alter the terms, conditions, or privileges of sale or rental, of a housing accommodation or dwelling to any buyer or renter due to the fact of an arrest or criminal history record information ordered expunged, sealed, or impounded under the Criminal Identification Act.

Relevant Recommendations: Identify rules, policies, practices and procedures that hinder the participation of eligible people in safety net programs and take effective action to remove barriers. Adopt a policy to “Ban the Box,” also termed “Move the Box,” which prohibits state job applications from asking if an individual has a criminal background, and use the state’s leadership to encourage and promote the hiring of individuals with criminal backgrounds.

Protecting Tenants against Foreclosure

Bill Synopsis: Will make permanent federal protections for tenants, which will sunset at the end of this year. These protections include adequate notice to move and that a lease survives a foreclosure.

Relevant Recommendation: Improve access to safe, decent and affordable housing.

Fair Tax Act

Bill Synopsis: Puts a question on the ballot whether the state constitution should change to allow for a graduated income tax. This would allow for changes to the tax code that could generate significantly more revenue and minimize cuts to programs and services that support individuals experiencing poverty.

Relevant Recommendation: ?

Debt Restructuring

Bill Synopsis: Authorizes the State to issue general obligation bonds with a low interest rate for sale to the public to generate money to be used to pay that State’s past due bills owed to small businesses, human service providers, hospitals, universities, school districts and local governments.

Relevant Recommendation: ?

Defensive Agenda

Limiting Access to Income Supports

Bill Synopsis: Restricts access to TANF, SNAP and other income support programs which provide critical support for individuals and families experiencing extreme poverty (ex. drug-testing, photo IDs on LINK cards, child limits on TANF, excluding individuals with criminal backgrounds from eligibility, etc.

Relevant Recommendations: Identify rules, policies, practices and procedures that hinder the participation of eligible people in safety net programs and take effective action to remove barriers.