

A Few Minutes with the Boss

By: Joe Andalina

Do you feel sorry for them?

Illinois lawmakers wrapped up their legislative year on May 31st. Now they get the summer off to do what legislators do all summer.

I'm almost sure that some of them work other jobs. I know this because they tell us so and the newspapers report that some of them make extra large sums of money doing a variety of work. I can't imagine that they use their official positions to enhance their bank accounts but it has been proffered that being an Illinois legislator has been helpful to many. I'm not talking about the few accused of taking bribes to fatten their wallets, either.

So the legislators rolled down their sleeves after passing and sending many bills to our old Governor "I was put on this earth to fix the pension crisis" Quinn. Some are good bills, most are fluff. Many aid their constituents and some are thoughtful and necessary.

Quinn signed some, vetoed others and some sit upon his desk waiting for the veto session this fall. That's when the legislators come back to Springfield, roll up their sleeves again and work for about another four days at the Capital, not counting brooding and discussion time.

But they "kicked the can" on the budget. Down the road, that is, to the new legislators who will be elected or those who may replace others for various reasons. And many, including Quinn, have expressed dismay over the budget, taxes, etc.

The new governor, either Quinn or Rauner, will be left with the prospect of figuring out how to resolve a reported budget gap of almost \$5 billion dollars. With that comes the piles of unpaid and overdue bills that the state still has not yet paid.

What a way to run a business.

And we as taxpayers await silently in our private Magic Forest to see exactly how the governor and his band of merry men are going to do this. Fix the budget and pay the bills, that is.

Remember in 2010 a lame duck session pushed through a 67 percent increase for your taxes? This increase was supposed to be for only four years and the 5 percent income tax is supposed to go down to 3.75 percent come January.

The politicians were aghast that the hike was going to be rolled back. But no one, (or at least some, especially the Republicans for other reasons) wanted to touch this one in an election year.

Quinn and his cronies want the 5 percent to be permanent. Did you see their lips moving when they said in 2010 it would roll back to 3.75 percent? You did? Then I don't need to tell you what that means.

So if the Dems get back in and with less pressure for elections, who know what will happen with the tax increase.

If the Republicans get in, then the Democrats will most likely sit on their hands and let the Republicans figure it all out. \$5 billion is a big budget hole.

On top of that are subsidiary issues. Some of them include Madigan's take on the pensions and the issues surrounding them in Chicago, Cook County, and municipalities throughout the suburbs and downstate.

That could be ugly, but the elections, the lawsuit and the stay from the state pension fix this year has saved us all who work as or were public employees. Temporarily at least.

There are also issues of other taxes; sales, business, and closing of loopholes. Anything to bring in a dime has been put off until next year, or maybe the veto session. Let's hope it's next year.

Give us a break from all your political machinations. Our wallets, our taxes, and our retirements are all at stake and it would be nice to have some respite until 2015.

It will be a good show and we can all wait happily until then.

Vita é Bella.