

2011

Legislative Priorities

**SOUTHWEST
CONFERENCE OF**

SM

MAYORS

Southwest Conference of Mayors' Members

Village of Alsip
Village of Bedford Park
City of Blue Island
Village of Bridgeview
City of Burbank
Village of Chicago Ridge
Village of Crestwood
Village of Evergreen Park
City of Hickory Hills
City of Hometown
Village of Justice
Village of Lemont
Village of Merrionette Park
Village of Oak Lawn
Village of Orland Hills
Village of Orland Park
City of Palos Heights
City of Palos Hills
Village of Palos Park
Village of Willow Springs
Village of Worth

Southwest Conference of Mayors' Officers

President - Mayor Gerald Bennett

Vice President - President Eugene Siegel

Vice President - Mayor James Sexton

Treasurer - Mayor Robert Straz

Executive Director - Vicky Matyas-Smith



The Southwest Conference of Mayors is comprised of the Chief Elected Officials from twenty-one communities in southwest suburban Cook County with a total population in excess of 350,000. The Southwest Conference of Mayors was formed in an attempt to lower the cost of government; to improve services for our citizens and to promote managerial expertise for the individual and joint benefit of the Member Municipalities. The Southwest Conference of Mayors has the purpose to coordinate its Membership experience and expertise on problems of mutual concern.

State Capital Program

A funded Capital Program for the State is needed to maintain, enhance and expand the State's deteriorating, inadequate and outdated transportation system. An improved infrastructure system as well as capacity enhanced infrastructure system for the State of Illinois will not only enhance the quality of life for the citizens of the State but it will also assist with keeping the existing businesses in the State and attract new business investment in the State.

Protecting Municipal Revenue

The Members of the Southwest Conference of Mayors strongly urge for the protection against any further efforts to erode municipal revenue sources, especially the local share of the state income tax and the one percent local portion of the sales tax. The current economy and recent fee increases and revenue diversions by the State have amplified this situation. The Southwest Conference of Mayors urge for the protection of local governments from any additional revenue loss and the restoration of any previously diverted revenues.

Repeal or Amend PA 96-1416 – Standards for Disposal of Clean Construction Debris

Public Act 96-1416 has resulted in significant impacts on municipalities, increasing the cost of public improvement contracts and day-to-day public works operations. The Act is intended to provide enhanced environmental protection by enacting more rigorous regulation of Clean Construction Demolition Debris (CCDD) fill sites. Spoils from municipal operations (such as excavation for utility repairs, tree planting, and public improvements) have generally been transported to CCDD sites for disposal. PA 96-1416 is intended to reduce the probability that contaminated material would be incorrectly classified and dumped in a CCDD site. However, when applied to day-to-day municipal operations, the new legislation will generate substantial difficulties, which will result in an increase in municipal costs.

Unfunded Mandates

The Southwest Conference of Mayors oppose any legislation that creates unfunded mandates for municipal governments. The Southwest Conference of Mayors oppose any attempts to reduce the State's share of funds currently provided for programs such as schools, roads, transit, parks, stormwater and other public infrastructure. The reduction in municipal revenues as a result of income tax credits, exemptions and property tax assessment freezes imposed by the State place a financial burden upon local governments seeking to provide local services. The SCM urges the Illinois General Assembly to pass a constitutional amendment requiring a super-majority vote of the General Assembly to pass any legislation creating unfunded State mandates.

Support Workers' Compensation Reform - Senate Bill 1066

Senate Bill 1066, as amended by House Amendment 2 provides for several reforms that are supported by employers in both the private and public sector. SB 1066 as amended is expected to result in much-needed cost savings for local governments and the business community.

The bill includes the following major reforms:

- Creation of a utilization review standard.
- Strengthened defense against injury claims where drugs or alcohol may have played a role.
- Reduction in the fee schedule by 15% (remains second highest in nation behind Alaska).
- Establishment of a wage differential cap for the later of age 67 or 5 years.
- Creation of a tougher fraud unit.
- Reduction of geo zips from 29 to 4 (same number as Medicare).
- Establishment of an oversight commission.

Support House Joint Resolution Constitutional Amendment 62 - Increase Voting Threshold for Pension Benefits

HJRCA 62 would have increased the voting requirements for the passage of state or local pension benefits.

Municipal Authority

Municipal governments are in a unique position to know well the needs of their residents and businesses. To best benefit this unique position, decision-making on local issues should rest with municipal governments. The General Assembly must reject laws that erode local decision-making authority.

Property Tax Reform

The County of Cook, Illinois has a drastic problem of extremely high property tax rates, which has affected its ability to retain and attract business and industry. Property tax reform is critical to stimulate economic development opportunities in Cook County. The Southwest Conference of Mayors urges the State Legislature to work with municipalities and other units of government to reform our system of property taxes.

Labor Issues

The Southwest Conference of Mayors oppose any legislation that attempts to eliminate local decision making authority regarding personnel issues. The Southwest Conference of Mayors opposes any non-negotiated attempts to increase pension benefits for municipal employees.

Protect Authority for Red Light Camera Enforcement

The Members of the Southwest Conference of Mayors support the continued use of red light camera enforcement for municipalities to address critical and significant public safety concerns.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The Members of the Southwest Conference of Mayors urge the Illinois General Assembly to reinstate in the State's budget the funding necessary for the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) to host Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days in Illinois; particularly in southwest suburban Cook County. The SCM urges the State to consider funding a permanent household hazardous waste collection site to be centrally located in Cook County.

Home Rule / Non-Home Rule Distinction

The SCM urges the Illinois General Assembly to recognize the ability of all municipalities to govern themselves, regardless of population. Home Rule municipalities have extensive flexibility in their everyday operation; while Non-Home Rule municipalities are limited in their ability to generate revenue and to exercise other authorities. Like Home Rule municipalities, Non-Home Rule municipalities need options to be able to provide essential local services and incentives for economic development. Municipalities would benefit from the removal of the distinction between Home Rule and Non-Home Rule municipalities.

School Funding Reform

The public school funding system needs to be reformed to fulfill the State's responsibility to provide an acceptable basic education and long-term funding equity with lessened reliance on local revenue. The SCM supports school funding reform legislation that identifies expectations, ascertain costs to meet them, generates and distributes adequate funds fairly and efficiently, and periodically evaluates the system's performance. The SCM believes that property tax relief and fiscal and performance accountability measures need to be a part of any reform package.

Transportation

The Southwest Conference of Mayors supports programs and policies which provide funding for various transportation and infrastructure projects. The SCM supports, in particular, the projects / issues listed below and requests the support of the Governor and General Assembly:

- ▶ Harlem Avenue Corridor Project
- ▶ Cicero Avenue Corridor Project
- ▶ Central / Narragansett Corridor
- ▶ Reconstruction of the original exit ramp of I-294 north of 88th Avenue
- ▶ Expanded service on Metra's Southwest Service Line
- ▶ Expanded service on Metra's Heritage Corridor Line
- ▶ Quality of life improvements to the Illinois Tollway System in the southwest area
- ▶ Inclusion of the south and southwest suburbs in Metra's Suburban Transit Access Route (STAR)
- ▶ High Speed Rail in Illinois
- ▶ Upgrading and providing proper signage along the corridors in the south and southwest region
- ▶ Construction of a full access interchange between I-294 and I-57
- ▶ CREATE Freight Rail Plan
- ▶ An interchange at Wolf Rod and I-80

Support for the Illinois Municipal League Legislative 2011 Legislative

The Members of the Southwest Conference of Mayors supports the IML 2011 Legislative Priorities:

- *TIF Funds May Be Used for Vertical Construction:* This proposal would allow for the use of Tax Increment Financing funds for vertical construction (bricks and mortar) to aid in the redevelopment of blighted areas.
- *Exempt Projects under \$50,000 from Prevailing Wage Act Requirements:* Exempts all fixed projects valued less than \$50,000 from the prevailing wage requirements.
- *Definition of "Catastrophic Injury" Under the Public Safety Employee Benefits Act:* Imposes a sensible federal definition for "catastrophic injury" to limit PSEBA health insurance benefits to only those that are unable to perform gainful employment.
- *Non-Home Rule Retail Theft Ordinances:* Authorizes a non-home rule municipality to enact a local retail theft ordinance.
- *Remove Referenda Requirements for Home Rule Real Estate Transfer Taxes:* Removes the requirement for home rule municipalities to hold referenda before imposing or increasing the rate of a real estate transfer tax.
- *Access to Sales-Tax Information:* Gives all municipalities access to sales-tax information from the Department of Revenue.
- *Alternate Procedures for Reapportioning Special Assessments:* Provides procedures for reapportioning special assessments for property that is divided by a means other than a formal subdivision.
- *Establish Deadline for Payment of LGDF Funds:* Requires the Comptroller to transfer funds from the General Revenue Fund to the Local Government Distributive Fund within seven days of receiving certification of payments from the Department of Revenue and the Treasurer's Office.
- *Publication of Legal Descriptions of Property:* Provides that legal notices requiring the newspaper publication of legal descriptions in their entirety can instead be satisfied by publication of the proposed action(s), common address, and property index number.
- *Allow Municipalities to Provide Economic Development Incentives:* Allows municipalities to provide economic incentives to encourage economic development within the community.
- *Require the Interest Arbitration Process to Consider Broader Financial Realities:* Require arbitrators to consider the actual affordability and broader fiscal implications of their decisions and adjust those decisions accordingly.
- *Include Levy Question in Police and IMRF Referendum Questions:* Establishes that referendum question for joining a police and/or IMRF pension fund must also address funding requirements by asking voters to authorize a levy within the same question. Creates a five-year exemption under tax caps when pension fund participation becomes mandatory.
- *Affirm and Broaden Exemption from Bargaining Over Manning Requirements:* Clarifies and expands the existing employer exemption from mandatory bargaining over manning levels.

- *Employer Authority to Recoup Paycheck Overpayments*: Allows employers to deduct money from an employee's paycheck if the deduction is necessary to correct an overpayment made in error.
- *Exempt Municipal Police and Firefighters from the Public Employee Disability Act*: Exempts municipal police and firefighters from a duty disability benefits that entitles an employee to receive their fully salary for up to one year.
- *Allows Municipalities to Determine the Form of Security Posted by Developers*: This proposal allows municipalities to determine the type of security developers must submit for completion of subdivision public improvements.
- *Clarification of the Authority of Local Requirements under the Plat Act*: Addresses the ambiguity of the language of Section 1 of the Plat Act by moving the language providing that "listed exemptions do not invalidate local requirements applicable to the subdivision of land" so that it is read to apply to all listed exemptions, as opposed to only the ninth.
- *Regulation and Licensing of Dealers of Second Hand Goods*: Provides that non-home rule municipalities may enact regulations on dealers of second hand goods, such as precious metals.
- *Eliminate Joint and Several Liability for Municipal Defendants*: Provides that municipalities defendants are not jointly and severally liable for tort damages.
- *Historical Preservation Tax Credit*: Creates a credit against state income taxes for rehabilitation of historical buildings.
- *Payment of Municipal Nuisance Liens through Insurance Proceeds*: Includes municipal nuisance liens in the certificate of payment of taxes and expenses on property sustaining loss with respect to insurance payments.
- *Collection of Debts Using Special Assessments*: Expand the list of acceptable building code violations and also include unpaid municipal utility services as eligible debts that may be collected through special assessments.
- *Amend Publication Act Providing Online Publication Notice*: Provides that whenever a municipality is required by law to give notice by publication in a newspaper, that publication requirement may be satisfied by posting the requisite material on the web-site established by the municipality, if one exists, and newspaper publication would require only a brief summary of the available information, a complete and accurate web address where the information may be accessed, and a listing of the address and location(s) where a print version of the information may be obtained.
- *Publication of Annual Treasurer's Report*: Provides that publication of the treasurer's report may be satisfied by posting the report on the municipality's web-site, if one exists, along with a notices that the report is available which shall be published in a newspaper in the municipality or, if none exist, a newspaper having a general circulation within the municipality.
- *Expand Authorization of Low-Speed Vehicles on Roads & Eliminate "Neighborhood Vehicles"*: Eliminates neighborhood vehicles as a type of non-highway vehicle. Authorizes road jurisdiction to permit low-speed vehicles to use roads with a posted speed limit of 35 mph.

Southwest Conference of Mayors

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Southwest Conference of Mayors' State Legislators

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Senator, 16th District

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Representative, 82nd District

