



NEWS

From the Illinois Senate

State Senator Dave Koehler

For immediate release

March 18, 2009

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Koehler Thinks Quinn's Budget Is a Good Start

SPRINGFIELD—State Senator David Koehler (D-Peoria) believes that Governor Quinn's budget proposal will provide a good base for negotiations.

"Governor Quinn has included some things in this budget that the state has desperately needed for a long time," said Koehler. "I'm particularly happy to see a capital plan that includes road repair for Peoria, Tazewell, and Fulton Counties. We need to repair Illinois' aging infrastructure."

According to the Governor's office, the capital construction plan will cost approximately \$26 billion and create as many as 340,000 jobs. The proposed plan includes both new construction and repairs, targeted at roads and bridges, schools, and mass transit. It also includes investments in green technology, Illinois-based energy sources, and economic development.

"Another area I'm pleased about is education," said Senator Koehler. "The budget proposal contains an increase in money for K-12 education. We need to do all we can to ensure Illinois students can compete with their peers nationwide, even in these tough economic times. This increase may not be as high as we've provided in the past, but given the state's financial woes, it's still a positive step."

The Governor's proposal also includes a number of initiatives to enhance revenue. One initiative is an income tax increase of 1.5%, accompanied by higher exemptions to protect low-income families. The Governor also suggests increasing a number of fees.

"I think Governor Quinn's tax proposal is a good starting point," said Koehler. "It's clear that we are going to have to do something to increase revenue. It's hard to say exactly what form tax and fee increases will take, but knowing that the Governor is committed to protecting low and middle income Illinoisans is reassuring."

Senator Koehler lauded several of the Governor's other commitments.

"The Governor has promised to make sure the state pays its bills on time," said Koehler. "Our failure to provide timely reimbursements to doctors, hospitals, and other vital service providers has been a huge disappointment. A prompt payment schedule will help ensure Illinois citizens receive quality services and keep businesses and facilities open. I also like Governor Quinn's idea of a 10-day sales tax holiday to help families afford back-to-school shopping. When we vote on a final budget, I hope it includes measures that help struggling families."

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