

Executive Committee

President
Debra Strauss

President-Elect
Bruce Bohren

**Vice President of
Field Operations**
Peg Staehlin

Vice President of Programs
Colleen Charaska

Secretary
Michele Sheppard

Treasurer
Barbara Miralgio

Executive Director
Jolene Lowder

February 25, 2010

Governor Pat Quinn
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Quinn,

On behalf of the nearly 145,000 members of the Illinois Parent Teacher Association (Illinois PTA), we appreciate this opportunity to share our concerns regarding the state budget for Fiscal Year 2011. As an association charged with speaking out on behalf of our most vulnerable citizens--our children--we watched as the Fiscal Year 2010 saw a nearly 50% decrease in the state's education budget, which was offset to some degree by nearly \$1B in stimulus (ARRA) funds. This year, the State Board of Education considered three different budget proposals for FY11--the first being a Draconian budget with major reductions; the second being a flat budget; and the third being a full needs budget. In the end, because of the failure of the Illinois revenue system and the current level of debt, the SBE adopted a flat budget in January which was amended in February.

We call upon the leaders of the state to recognize that the failure of our revenue system has necessitated the consideration of a "doomsday" budget, and that again our children will bear a significant portion of the costs reduced in that budget scenario. **We call upon the leaders of the state to fully fund educational programs as to ensure the future of every child in Illinois--that means supporting a full needs budget as outlined in the attached document.**

We further call upon you, Governor Quinn, to lead the way in providing adequate, equitable, long-term sustainable funding for education as well as health, human services and public safety. To that end, we ask you to join us in supporting **HB174 as amended by the Senate** to alleviate the fiscal meltdown that Illinois is facing.

We support **HB174 as amended by the Senate** since it will provide much needed revenue while providing relief to low income families and home owners by:

- expanding the sales tax base to include 39 consumer services already taxed in surrounding states;
- increasing the earned income tax credit;
- increasing the property tax exemption for homeowners from 5% to 10%;
- increasing the individual standard exemption from \$2,000 to \$3,000; and
- increasing the individual income tax rate to 5%.

We believe that the only means of addressing the structural deficit, the underfunded pension systems and restoring programs and services which have been either eliminated or drastically reduced in the education, health and human services, and public safety arena is by passing **HB174 as amended by the Senate.**

Sincerely,

Debra Strauss, President

Barbara Quinn, Legislation Chair

cc: Senator John Cullerton, Senate President
Senator Christine Radogno

Rep. Michael Madigan, Speaker of the House
Rep. Thomas Cross