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## Illinois Politics Summed up in Eleven Words

*“Now is the chance to grab the money when we can”*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – After months of debate and failed attempts to pass a transportation plan, the Illinois House of Representatives approved a plan Wednesday to finance the bailout of the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) with state revenue. Despite repeated calls for a comprehensive, statewide transportation plan, Democrats in the House rallied to pull off the passage of this plan, which opponents feel does little more than paper over the financial mismanagement of the CTA.

Following the vote, State Rep. Mike Boland (D-East Moline) expressed his rationale for the House Democrats ramped-up efforts: “Now is the chance to grab the money when we can.” Reports of corruption have long echoed through the capitol halls in Springfield so the statement may be less than shocking for taxpayers.

“Rep. Boland has publicly declared what fiscal conservatives have long pointed out about big government tax-and-spenders,” said Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform. “For big spenders like those in Illinois, solving financial problems isn’t about fiscal responsibility or respect for taxpayer dollars- it’s about the quick fix at ‘someone else’s’ expense. Politics is only a game for legislators like Rep. Boland and taxpayers are the ones who lose time and time again.”

The transit issue has long been debated in Springfield. The Chicago Transit Authority, an agency known for its financial struggles, began demanding for a state bailout in 2007. Illinois lawmakers were unable to agree on a plan due to opposition from downstate lawmakers who demanded a statewide transportation plan before passing a quick-fix regional bailout.

Under the passed plan, funding for the \$400 million CTA bailout will come from a hike in the regional sales tax and an increase in the Chicago title transfer tax. Since passing through the house, the senate has approved the current plan. Gov. Rod Blagojevich (D) has asked that the legislature amend the plan, adding state-funded rides for senior citizens.

“By passing a bailout plan for the CTA, the Illinois legislature is brushing aside true spending reform while sending a message loud and clear to state government officials and taxpayers,” continued Norquist. “State agencies are being told that accountability and responsibility is of no concern while taxpayers are being told to grin and bear a tax hike.”

Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who oppose all tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact John Kartch at (202) 785-0266 or by email at [jkartch@atr.org](mailto:jkartch@atr.org).

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