

State Representative
MICHAEL J. MADIGAN
Speaker of the House



State Senator
JOHN J. CULLERTON
Senate President

300 Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-5350
(217) 524-1794 FAX

327 Capitol Building
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 782-2728
(217) 782 3242 FAX

ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

July 30, 2013

Dear Fellow Legislator:

As you know, Governor Quinn took unprecedented action when he used the line item veto to eliminate General Assembly members' salaries for the entire year. This action was purely political and an unconstitutional attempt to coerce the legislature to comply with his demands. We write to inform you that later today we will file a lawsuit challenging Governor Quinn's unconstitutional action.

This matter is of fundamental constitutional importance, as Governor Quinn's action threatens the independence of each branch of government. The Illinois Constitution protects the salaries of members of the judiciary, the legislature, and the executive branch. These provisions were added to safeguard the people from a weakened judiciary, to ensure the legislature could not diminish the power of the executive, and to prohibit the governor from running roughshod over the legislature. By eliminating General Assembly members' salaries, the Governor has chosen to disregard separation of powers and its necessity if our government is to work properly and efficiently.

For us to ignore the Governor's actions, or override the veto, would severely and irrevocably compromise the independence of the legislature and set a very dangerous precedent. Just as it would be inappropriate for the General Assembly to refuse to appropriate a constitutional officer's salary simply because we disagree with his or her philosophy, it is no less offensive for the Governor to attempt to withhold legislators' salaries because they have not complied with his demand for action on a particular issue. If unchecked, any governor could attempt to employ the same tactic to threaten the legislature, the judiciary, or another constitutional officer to accomplish his or her own personal agenda. In this case, the Governor is seeking changes to the pension system, but next time it could be tax policy, gun control, or education reform. The possibilities are endless.

The purpose of this lawsuit is to protect the independence of the legislature and preserve the separation of powers. It is our hope that the court will remedy this constitutional violation and that future governors will not feel empowered to use such coercive tactics.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michael J. Madigan in black ink.

Michael J. Madigan
Speaker of the House

Handwritten signature of John J. Cullerton in black ink.

John J. Cullerton
President of the Senate