

Legislative Interview with State Representative Scott Drury, March 13, 2015

Fiscal Policy

1. Rep. Drury voted for the income tax rollback because the voters had been promised that 5% was temporary. In the past, Illinois always found a way to keep services running, usually by delaying payments to vendors, so voters elected Rauner, who promised to keep taxes low. Rauner will propose revenue alternatives, probably a sales tax on services. Democrats will propose other revenue increases, and compromises will be reached. On the spending side, Rauner's balanced budget depends on reforms such as pension reform, which Drury thinks will not pass the courts. The cuts to municipal aid and delays in paying state bills (now 180-250 days) will, however, stand.

2. Illinois' funding of human services is horrific - 50th of the states. Human services organizations are not spendthrifts. There are not a lot of people fighting for this funding in the 58th District. When day care is cut, people can't work so they go on welfare, which is more expensive. To increase this funding would require decreased spending elsewhere unless revenue is increased. Drury thinks child care will be funded for 2015 in the next two weeks.

Education Funding

1. Rauner believes early education is more important than higher, so his budget increases funding for K-12 but decreases funding for higher education by 30%. The gap between high and low districts is \$6700 vs. \$3200 per pupil. SB 16 would cut special education, which is important to the 58th District. More money is not the whole answer for poor districts, however. Lack of parent support is another big factor.

Criminal Justice

1. Rep. Drury is vice chair of the Joint Criminal Justice Committee. His support of the committee's recommendations will depend on what they recommend, but he expects to help write the recommendations and to be in the majority. He favors treatment rather than incarceration for the mentally ill. He thinks both parties and "big Pharma" support this, given the financial and human cost of incarceration. He is working on wrongful convictions.

2. Relief from the overcrowding of jails is one of the goals of the overhaul of the criminal justice system. Drury favors diversion to treatment and jobs. He cautioned that care has to be taken because if a released inmate commits a major crime, the whole program would fail. He praised Cook County Sheriff Dart's program to put released mentally ill offenders into treatment and nonviolent ones into electronic monitoring. He is prepared for criticism of being soft on crime because he is a former prosecutor.

Redistricting

Rep. Drury thinks districts should be drawn with strong consideration of the Voting Rights Act, preserving the ability of racial and language minority communities to elect candidates, and not favoring one political party over another. If these principles are followed, then geographic and municipal boundaries should also be respected. He proposed an independent commission but he doubts any majority party will ever support it. He, however, would vote for it.

Election Laws

Eventually people will vote from home. Early voting helps reduce lines at polling places, but same-day registration will lengthen them. County clerks who don't want people to vote will always say machines are broken.

Environment

Rep. Drury supports the Clean Power Plan.

Fracking

Rep. Drury supported the moratorium on fracking. He notes that because oil prices fell, no one is fracking in Illinois.

Gun Violence Prevention

1. He supports requiring a state license to sell multiple firearms in Illinois.
2. The California law sounds reasonable. We have to do what we can to reduce gun violence.

Health Care

1. Managed care for Medicaid patients is not the best solution, but he will give this more thought.
2. Since federal subsidies are not promised now for using a state exchange, he worries how Illinois would pay for a state exchange. Rep. Gabel is the lead on this issue.