

August 19, 2018

To the Honorable Members of  
The Illinois House of Representatives,  
100th General Assembly:

Today I veto House Bill 126 from the 100th General Assembly, which expands the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act to mandate that local governments collectively bargain with any paramedics that they employ. Specifically, the Bill adds “paramedics employed by a unit of local government” to the definition of “firefighter” in the Act, making them “public employees” for the purpose of collective bargaining.

This Bill would operate as an unfunded state mandate on local governments. Local governments should have flexibility to determine benefit and employment conditions for their own employees based on local resources, needs and labor availability, including the categories of employees with collective bargaining rights. By forcing all local governments to collectively bargain with paramedics in their employ, the Bill limits locals’ ability to control and curb their operations and spending.

In addition, this Bill perpetuates the decades of political corruption that has plagued the State of Illinois for too long. Time and again elected officials have granted sweeping benefits and power to the unions in exchange for campaign contributions and political support, creating a system of entrenchment, waste and bad government. Today, Illinois has one of the highest percentages of unionized public employees in the country and offers extremely generous employment and pension benefits. These corrupt bargains are motivated more by the interests of the union leaders and politicians who benefit the most, than by the interests of the individual workers.

I have the utmost respect for paramedics in Illinois. Their work is extremely taxing and critical to the health and survival of many Illinois citizens and visitors. This Bill, however, continues the deep political corruption between union leaders and elected state officials that is debilitating this State. The Bill widens the already bloated union population in the public sector—increasing the union’s entrenchment and wealth—and puts a significant financial and administrative burden on local governments.

Therefore, pursuant to Section 9(b) of Article IV of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return House Bill 126, entitled "AN ACT concerning government," with the foregoing objections, vetoed in its entirety.

Sincerely,

Bruce Rauner  
GOVERNOR