

August 26, 2011

To the Honorable Members of the
Illinois Senate
97th General Assembly

This legislation alters the way that financial incentives are provided to conventions and trade shows at McCormick Place or the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center in Rosemont.

Currently, the organizations that operate these facilities work with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in creating the incentive packages that would be provided to a convention or trade show. The costs of the incentive package are reimbursed by the State of Illinois and the State subjects the packages to rigorous oversight.

The bill before me replaces this system with one where the convention centers are not reimbursed, but instead receive the money up-front, without oversight. The legislation also contains provisions that make it difficult to ensure that there is any accountability in the award of these incentives. While I remain committed to attracting convention and tourism business to Illinois, I simply cannot affix my signature to any plan that uses millions of taxpayer dollars for private purposes without appropriate oversight and accountability standards.

Therefore, pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(b) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I return Senate Bill 1918, entitled "AN ACT concerning State government.", with the foregoing objections, vetoed in its entirety.

Sincerely,

PAT QUINN
Governor