

NEWS

... from the Illinois House of Representatives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 22, 2009

FOR MORE INFORMATION

State Rep. Karen May
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MAY REJECTS PAY RAISE, VOTES FOR REFORM

Measure Abolishes Compensation Review Board, Improves Accountability

SPRINGFIELD, IL – State Rep. Karen May (D-Highland Park) voted Wednesday to reject pay raises for legislators and do away with the controversial method elected officials have used to increase their own pay while avoiding accountability to the taxpayers.

“We have to make some difficult decisions this spring while we put together the state’s budget, but it is just common sense to reject legislator pay raises and cost of living increases,” May said. “There are so many vulnerable citizens struggling through this difficult economy with limited resources that no public servant should even consider increasing their taxpayer-paid salary, and if they do, they should be held accountable.”

Senate Bill 2090 eliminates the Compensation Review Board, the body which makes recommendations on pay raises for elected officials. The Compensation Review Board’s pay raise process has proven to be an ineffective check and balance that provides a way for elected officials to escape responsibility for hiking their salary. Under current law, members of both the House and Senate are required to pass the same resolution rejecting the automatic pay increase, but rarely does the other chamber consider their counterpart’s resolution. Thus, the pay raise goes into effect, while each chamber can technically say they rejected the pay raise. Under the May-backed reform measure, pay increases must pass like any other law in both the House and Senate and be signed into law by the Governor, holding elected officials accountable to the public for their actions. Additionally, the bill requires lawmakers to take four furlough – unpaid leave – days to save money and help balance the state budget

May has been a leader in the effort to reform the way elected officials receive pay increases and was commended by House Speaker Michael Madigan during debate on the House Floor for her leadership in keeping this issue on the table this session.

“I told legislative leaders throughout the spring that I will not vote for a state budget until real changes are made in Springfield and this bill is a great start down the path towards real ethics reforms and accountability,” May said. “With a 12 billion deficit, it is irresponsible to take a pay-raise; in fact we will be giving money back to the taxpayers by taking furlough days this year.”

Senate Bill 2090 passed the House unanimously and awaits concurrence in the Senate. For more information, please contact May’s constituent service office at (847) 433-9100 or visit www.ilga.gov.

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