



Message from the President



Doug Whitley, President & CEO
Illinois Chamber of Commerce

www.ilchamber.org

ACTION MEMORANDUM

TO: All Local Chamber of Commerce organizations in Illinois to share with officers, directors and members

FROM: Doug Whitley, President & CEO, Illinois Chamber of Commerce

DATE: March 9, 2007

RE: SUGGESTED ACTION AGENDA TO PURSUE IN THE FIGHT TO HALT GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH'S PLANS FOR HUGE SPENDING AND TAX INCREASES, IN PARTICULAR THE GROSS RECEIPTS TAX.

I recognize many local chamber organizations choose to not engage in public policy issues that touch upon political decisions. If that is the case in your chamber, I understand it may be necessary to forego adopting a resolution or orchestrating public activities such as press events or legislative forums. Even so, I sincerely request this memo be circulated among your membership because individual business owners are seeking guidance about what they can do to engage in and influence this important debate. I know this because I have received phone calls and emails asking for such assistance. Thanks. Doug

Each local Chamber of Commerce could pursue any of the following suggestions:

1. Adopt a policy statement objecting to the imposition of a gross receipts tax in Illinois that is identical or similar to the policy statement adopted by the Illinois Chamber Board of Directors at the December 2006 board meeting. A copy of the Illinois Chamber policy statement is available on our web site, www.ilchamber.org.
2. If adopted, send a copy of the policy statement or resolution to the Senator(s) and Representative(s) elected to represent your community or region.
3. If adopted, send a copy of your chamber policy statement or resolution to every member of your local chamber and urge them to take an active step by communicating their individual experience, perspective or opposition to their respective legislators.

Keep in mind that if you work and live in two or more different communities it is appropriate to reach out to legislators who represent your residence and your business locations.

4. Communicate the chamber's position to local media outlets, especially to newspaper publishers and station owners/managers.
5. Ask business owners who are members of the chamber to consider what the imposition of a gross receipts tax policy in Illinois may mean to their business. Once the business owners have taken time to calculate the impact

the gross receipts tax might have on their business, ask if some of them would be willing to tell their stories to the press and/or to legislators.

6. The Illinois Chamber would like to collect real life examples of how individual business owners and companies think the imposition of the Governor's gross receipts tax plans will affect them or their industries. We would welcome the receipt of such information by email or hard copy delivery. We want to build a portfolio of case study examples to help convince legislators that Illinois employers are informed and convinced that the GRT is a bad idea.

7. Convene a press conference and let local business owners tell their stories. Chambers and allied groups in Champaign, Quad Cities, Rockford, and Quincy have already done this with positive results. . Illinois Chamber staff can assist with messaging, technical details and planning advice. Contact Todd Maisch at 217-522-5512.

8. Convene a legislative briefing with your elected state Senator(s) and Representative(s) and let local business owners tell their stories.

9. Communicate to all chamber members that the Illinois Chamber web site, www.ilchamber.org, has an easy method they may use to communicate their opinions and concerns about the gross receipts tax and the proposed new employee withholding tax to their legislators. Direct them to the "Grassroots Action Center" and encourage them to use it. Contact Liz Kerns at 217-522-5512 for further assistance.

10. Every chamber member should be encouraged to call, write or visit their elected legislators to voice their opinion about how detrimental this tax proposal will be to their business and the Illinois economy.

11. Encourage business owners to write letters to the editors of local print media publications and seek opportunities to participate in call-in radio programs.

12. Urge business owners to invite reporters to their business and engage in personal tours or interviews to explain cost of doing business issues they face every day and how huge new tax increases by the Illinois General Assembly would affect their operations or plans for expansion.

13. Inform every chamber member that if they are prepared to contribute funds to help our opposition campaign to the Gross Receipts Tax, the Illinois Chamber is leading the charge and would welcome financial support. Checks should be sent to the Illinois Chamber, 215 East Adams, Springfield, Illinois, 62701. Contributions to the Illinois Chamber Political Action Committee (Chamber PAC) may be submitted online by credit card here.

The Illinois Coalition for Jobs, Growth and Prosperity is developing and funding a media outreach campaign. The Illinois Chamber is a founding member and active participant in this Coalition and would welcome financial help for the opposition media campaign. This tax, once implemented, will cost employers and business owners a fortune every year, so sending money to the Illinois Chamber to fight this irrational tax scheme should be recognized as a worthwhile short-term investment.

14. Inform Chamber members the Illinois Chamber will launch a special web site dedicated to the Gross Receipts Tax campaign where they can stay informed on details of the legislative proposal, as well as related activities and information. The web site will be launched March 14. The address is:
www.largesttaxincreaseever.com.

15. Remind business owners the objective of their contacts with local legislators should be to inform them how detrimental this tax scheme may be to their business and to ask legislators for a commitment to vote against the taxes the governor is seeking.

16. Advise business owners the Governor's tax scheme is not limited to the Gross Receipts Tax. The Governor also seeks a 3% payroll tax on all employers with ten or more employees. The payroll tax will be required whether or not the company currently provides healthcare benefits. The new tax is anticipated to contain a refund or credit mechanism, but to qualify for a full refund of the payroll tax the company's healthcare benefit plan must be equivalent to at least 4% of payroll.

Finally, Tax Institute Executive Director Connie Beard's notes from Thursday's budget briefing to provide more detail on the Governor's tax plan can be read [here](#).

If you have questions, seek additional information or wish to discuss the matter further you may reach me by email at dwhitley@ilchamber.org or by phone at 312-983-7103.