

2010  
budget solutions

## You Spent My Tax Dollars On What??

*How silly spending in 2009 contributed to 2010's budget mess*

Every day, ordinary Illinoisans balance their family budgets between necessities and luxuries. They also ask themselves the hard questions: Do I need the premium cable package, or will the basic plan suffice? Can I afford daily home delivery of a newspaper? Is my 1,000-minutes-a-month cell phone plan really necessary? Should I bring my lunch to work, or eat out?

Individuals and families make these hard choices to avoid a situation where they've spent more than they've earned. "I wants," in other words, are put aside in favor of "I needs." Too often, this isn't the case for government.

In fiscal year 2009, Illinois state government spent \$4.3 billion more than it brought in. So what did taxpayers get out that \$4.3 billion? Try \$2 million for 3-D teaching technology and \$27,800 for harness racing expenses at the DuQuoin State Fair.

Governor Pat Quinn rolls the 2009 deficit of \$4.3 billion into his calculation of an \$11.6 billion budget gap for 2010. He wants us to pay for last year's extravagances with increases in the income taxes.

Be your own judge. On page 2 of this

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report, we've listed a wide variety of General Revenue Fund expenses from 2009, including an \$920,000 Aerospace Education Initiative and a \$750,000 "Chicagoland Memory Bridge" project. If politicians can't even get rid of these blatant examples of waste, how can they responsibly handle the government's bigger expenditures? Is wasteful spending from last year worth a hike in your income taxes now?

### Conclusion

Deficits don't appear out of nowhere. They stem from the irresponsible habit of spending more than you have. Unfortunately, the General Assembly fully embraced this bad habit in 2009—in more ways than one—and left taxpayers with a \$4.3 billion deficit.

The spending listed on page 2 is merely a small part of a destructive, larger pattern. We need to remember that the \$11.6 billion deficit we're facing today came from somewhere, and that somewhere includes the \$33.9 million spent in 2009 on the twenty-two programs listed in Table 1.

For much of this questionable spending, it's too late for taxpayers to recoup their losses. The government has written the check and the money has been spent. We can, however, stop future wasteful expenditures from happening by insisting that the governor and the General Assembly focus less on the "I wants" as they craft the 2010 budget.

**TABLE I: Examples of Illinois State Government  
Wasteful Spending Projects in FY 2009**

Name of Item	FY 2009 General Revenue Fund Appropriations	Description
Grow Your Own Teacher	\$3,000,000	The Grow Your Own Teachers Act was passed in 2005 as a way to convert parents, professionals, and community leaders into teachers. <sup>1</sup>
Class Size Reduction Pilot Project	\$8,000,000	The Class Size Reduction Pilot Project was enacted in 2006 to encourage schools to hire more teachers and limit classrooms to 20 students. <sup>2</sup>
Aerospace Education Initiative	\$920,000	This program was designed to bring space education into the classroom and use “21st century technology.”
Healthy Kids/Healthy Minds Program	\$4,000,000	This program incorporates healthy food habits into education. Those are some expensive habits!
Adler Planetarium and Museum of Science and Industry	\$400,000	The Illinois State Board of Education gave money to both institutions for educational programs.
Principal Mentoring Program	\$3,100,000	A mentoring program for new principals to learn from experienced ones. High school principals across Illinois make an average of \$100,000 a year—one would think job training wouldn’t cost an extra \$3 million.
Classroom Cubed	\$2,000,000	An education program using 3-D technology for teaching.
Hispanic Center of Excellence at the University of Illinois-Chicago <sup>3</sup>	\$800,000	A center designed to increase the number of Latino students at UIC Medical School.
Governor’s State University	\$1,300,000	In order to run the International Trade Center, Institute for Urban Education, and the Center for Excellence in Health Education.
Grant to Les Turner ALS Foundation <sup>4</sup>	\$100,000	Started in 1977, Les Turner ALS Foundation has become the “nation’s largest independent ALS organizations” and “has raised \$33 million to fight Lou Gehrig’s disease.” <sup>5</sup>
Grant to Bridget Hartigan Education and Awareness Campaign <sup>6</sup>	\$100,000	Hon. Neil Hartigan – who formerly held positions of Deputy Chicago Mayor, Illinois Attorney General <sup>7</sup> , and Illinois Lieutenant Governor, started this campaign in honor of his daughter.
Grants to the University of Chicago	\$2,500,000	A taxpayer-funded grant for the Transplant Section for Juvenile Diabetes research. <sup>8</sup> The University’s current endowment, meanwhile, is over \$6 billion.
Methamphetamine awareness <sup>9</sup>	\$1,500,000	Grants paid to methamphetamine “awareness” programs.
Chicagoland Memory Bridge Initiative	\$750,000	A program aimed at teaching junior and senior high school students about Alzheimer’s disease. <sup>10</sup>
DuQuoin State Fair Racing	\$27,800	For harness racing expenses at the DuQuoin State Fair.

Name of Item	FY 2009 General Revenue Fund Appropriations	Description
Illinois State Fair Racing	\$129,900	For Grand Circuit Horse Racing at the Illinois State Fair.
Livestock Awards	\$151,000	For awards given to livestock breeders at the Illinois State Fair.
Lincoln Bicentennial	\$500,000	For expenses related to the Lincoln Bicentennial celebration.
Illinois Wine and Grape Industry	\$232,800	Grants and expenses to develop the Illinois Wine and Grape Industry.
Urban Fishing Program Grant	\$262,500	In order to provide fishing and resources to the Chicago Park District.
National Corn-to-Ethanol Research Center	\$4,000,000	For expenses, expansion, research, and maintenance of the center at Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.
Vault Toilets Grants	\$137,897	For the construction of “vault toilets”—high-end porta-potties—at seven state parks.
<b>TOTAL SPENDING</b>	<b>\$33,911,897</b>	

**Notes**

1. *Public Act 94-979, Section 5, <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/94/PDF/094-0979.pdf>.*
2. *Public Act 95-0734, Article 7 Section 15, PDF p. 418*
3. *Public Act 95-0734, Article 15, Section 20, PDF p. 215. <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/95/PDF/095-0734.pdf>.*
4. *Public Act 93-0036, Article 33, Section 45, PDF p. 259.*
5. *“Les Turner ALS Foundation - About Us.” Les Turner ALS Foundation- Fighting Lou Gehrig’s disease. 18 Mar. 2009 <http://www.lesturnerals.org/about.htm>.*
6. *Public Act 95-0348, Article 30, Section 45, PDF p.526*
7. *Jim McClure, “Chicago’s Irish Eyes on the World: Neil Hartigan,” Irish American News, February 2007, p. 36, [http://www.irishamericannews.com/PDF/ian\\_0207.pdf](http://www.irishamericannews.com/PDF/ian_0207.pdf).*
8. *Public Act 95-0348, Article 33, Section 50, PDF pp. 528-30.*
9. *Public Act 95-0734, Article 12, Section 110, PDF.*
10. *Public Act 95-0734, Article 12 Section 280, PDF p. 192.*