

Issue Brief

ANALYSIS OF GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH'S VETOES & WHAT THEY MEAN ACROSS ILLINOIS

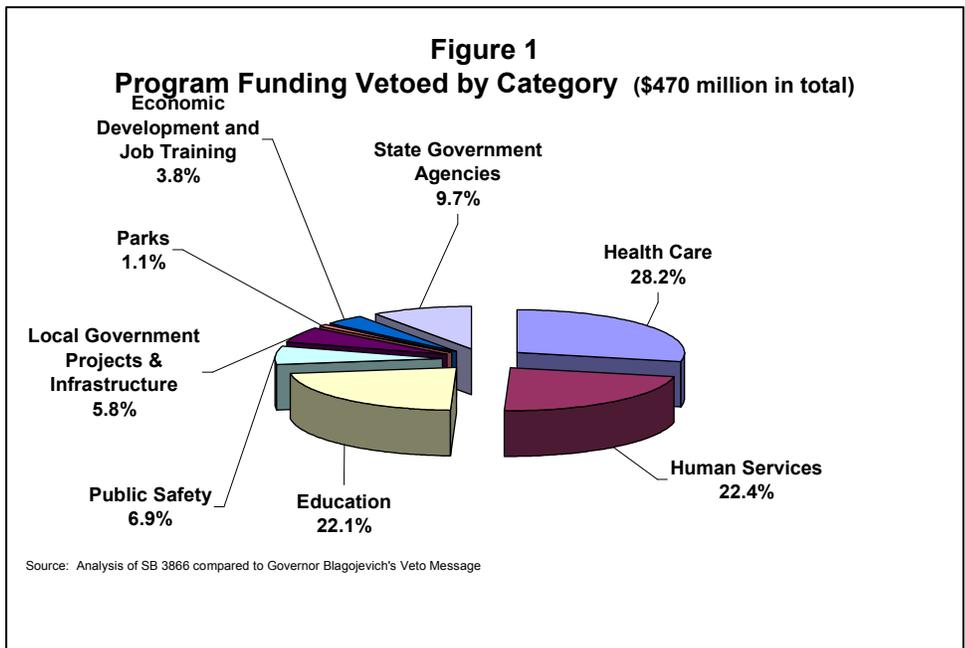
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Under the Illinois Constitution, the Governor has the veto authority to reduce a portion of or completely eliminate an appropriation made to fund a particular program or service.¹

A thorough review of all items reduced and vetoed in the proposed state budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 reveals that the Governor cut \$470 million from the total appropriation proposed for the FY 2008 budget, about \$7 million more than the announced amount of \$463 million.

Analysis reveals that the vetoed items are not necessarily "wasteful spending." Most of the cuts reduced funding for public services like mental health, after school programs, and homeless programs. Figure 1 illustrates what the percentage of the total veto reduction funding represented by each service.



Highlights of the vetoes include cuts of:

- \$50 million – Long term care services,
- \$40 million – Ambulatory care,
- \$21.3 million - Programs for people with physical and developmental disabilities,
- \$6.5 million - CeaseFire, an organization that works to prevent violence in Illinois,
- \$6.0 million - Mental health programs,
- \$5.7 million - Local police and fire departments,
- \$5.0 million - Relief of classroom crowdedness,
- \$4.7 million - After school programs and Illinois State Board of Education programs for youth,
- \$2.0 million - Juvenile justice programs,
- \$2.1 million - Grants for prenatal services and high-risk infants,
- \$1.1 million – Senior services including Meals on Wheels and transportation,
- \$1.2 million - HIV/AIDS programs,
- \$1.3 million - Local health clinics, and
- \$300 thousand – Food programs for the needy.

¹ IL Constitution Article IV Section 9.



Was It Pork?

Many of you have probably read that the General Assembly budget is laden with pork. So what does that really mean? Most frequently, the term “pork projects” is used to describe General Revenue Funds allocated to individual members of the General Assembly for use on projects in their home districts they deem worthy. Since the projects are usually not identified in specific appropriations in the budget, these projects are dubbed “member initiatives,” i.e., each member is allocated a portion of the budget to fund initiatives in his or her district. The FY 2008 budget has an estimated \$200 million (\$650,000 for each house member and over \$1 million for each senate member) in member initiative projects.

As for the term “pork,” while it might make a good story, it does not appear necessary to change the state's name to “Illinoink”. In the aggregate, the cost of all projects designated “pork” in the budget is roughly \$200 million, which is less than one percent of the state’s general fund. It is also not necessarily wasteful spending, but state dollars that go to local communities for things that taxpayers want and need. While some member initiatives are hard to justify – the notorious funding for a statue of Jack Benny comes to mind – the vast majority of member initiatives have less to do with “pork” and more to do with funding local needs like fire and police, parks, bridges and libraries.

One example of a member initiative cut in the recent veto was \$100,000 earmarked for Jamal Place. Jamal Place is a group home for preteen and adolescent boys who are wards of the state. They are wards of the state because their past history usually includes violence, crime or abuse, rendering it impossible to place them with families. Jamal place provides these young boys, who have nowhere else to go, with a home, therapy, community involvement, and work-life skills, giving them at least a fighting chance to become productive members of society. Hardly any could argue that funding for Jamal Place is “pork.” While it certainly would be best for taxpayers if there were more transparency and accountability on member initiatives, broadly calling all of this funding “pork” distorts reality and does little or nothing to truly advance the public debate.

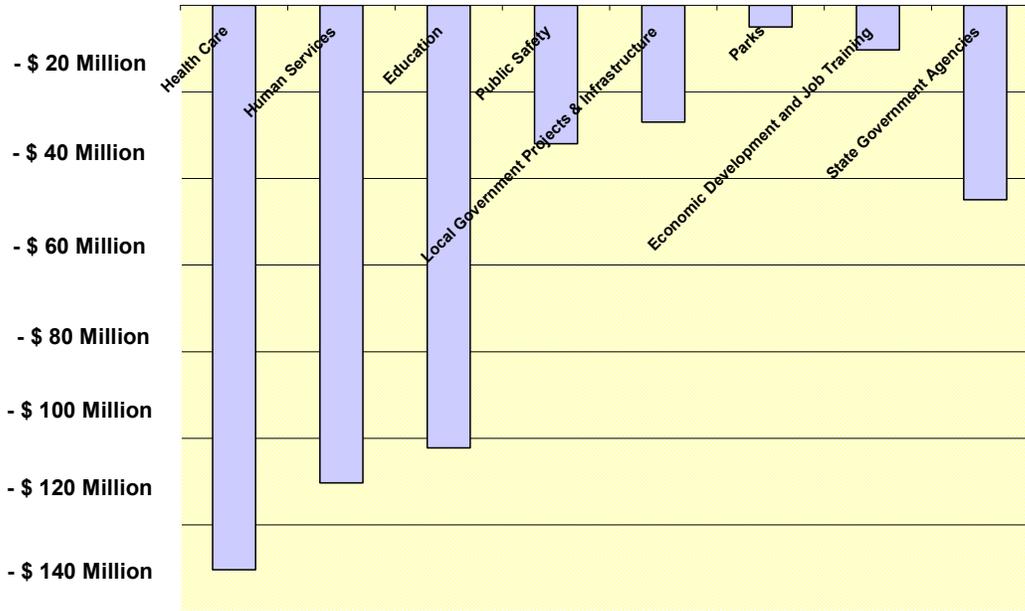
Figures 2 and 3 illustrate the dollar value of appropriations that were either completely eliminated or reduced in the Governor’s recent veto, by service category.

Figure 2: Amount of Funding Vetoed or Reduced by Category

Category	\$ Amount of Line Items Eliminated	\$ Amount of Line Items Reduced	Total Cut
Health Care	-\$13,403,600	-\$116,987,100	-\$130,390,700
Human Services	-\$46,674,787	-\$56,646,628	-\$103,321,415
Education	-\$53,866,836	-\$48,386,900	-\$102,253,736
Public Safety	-\$7,654,350	-\$24,316,354	-\$31,970,704
Local Government Projects and Infrastructure	-\$26,950,285	N/A	-\$26,950,285
Parks	-\$5,008,851	N/A	-\$5,008,851
Economic Development and Job Training	-\$17,332,200	N/A	-\$17,332,200
State Government Agencies	-\$3,750,000	-\$41,188,350	-\$44,938,350
Other	-\$5,958,250	N/A	-\$5,958,250
Non Category Items	-\$2,643,550	N/A	-\$2,643,550
TOTAL	-\$183,242,709	-\$287,525,332	-\$470,768,041



Figure 3
Amount of Budgeted Funding Vetoed by Governor by Major Category



Source: Analysis of SB 3866 compared to Governor Blagojevich's Veto Message

To view a list of all 1,504 budget items eliminated and reduced by the Governor please visit the following links:

[View All Projects Vetoed](#)

[View All Projects Reduced in Funding](#)

By Category:

[Health Care](#)

[Human Services](#)

[Education](#)

[Public Safety](#)

[Local Government Projects & Infrastructure](#)

[Parks](#)

[State Government Agencies](#)

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