2015 Campaigns and Issues

Our Work in Responsible Budget Coalition (RBC)
Since the expiration of the 2014 income tax rates (where the top 3% of the state’s wealthiest earners got 33% of the benefit,) Governor Rauner has refused to embrace revenue. Citizen Action/IL, in its leadership role on the Executive Committee of the RBC, a statewide coalition of more than 200 member organizations have come together to advance three principles:

1) No more cuts to vital programs and services
2) Adequate revenue to support priorities and investment
3) Fairness in raising revenue

CA/IL did advocacy during the 2015 General Assembly in pitching multiple revenue solutions for the state and making it clear to legislators that the lack of a state budget would bring disastrous consequences. After the budget expired on July 1st, CA/IL was on the front lines of organizing pressure on legislators and bringing new organizations on to participate in the RBC.

Mind the Store
Toxic chemicals are in many of the household items we use every day. CA/IL joined the Mind the Store campaign to put pressure on national retailers like Walgreens and Macy’s to eliminate selling products with known hormone disruptors and carcinogens. After holding two successful press events in front of Walgreen’s flagship store in Chicago and delivering 1,000 petitions to the CEO, he announced that the products would be removed from stores. A massive online action produced a similar pledge for Macy’s stores in that the stores would work dutifully with their vendors to remove the products and find alternatives for consumers.

Tammy Duckworth Early Endorsement
On November 7th, Citizen Action/Illinois’ Policy Council voted unanimously to make an early endorsement of Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth in her bid for U.S. Senate. The Council heard presentations from both Congresswoman Duckworth and Andrea Zopp, one of her opponents in the Democratic Primary.

Congresswoman Duckworth, a distinguished Iraq War veteran, has worked with Citizen Action/Illinois closely on the payday loan reform rules to protect members of the military from predatory and abusive practices.

Congresswoman Duckworth has an excellent voting record on a number of issues favored by CA/IL, including the rights of workers, the LGBT community, environmental justice, and civil rights.

Illinois Rights at Work (ILRW)
Co-Director William McNary and CA/IL staff have run over a dozen ILRW presentations across the state, including community meetings in Peoria, Champaign, Chicago, Aurora, Lake, McHenry and DuPage Counties, with many more to be scheduled. All over the state, we have talked with everyone from teachers to bankers to small business owners that recognize the harm being done to the state by a Governor holding the state budget hostage to his radical and unpopular demands.

Through this working campaign we have signed up hundreds of new participants, kept them informed of major developments regarding the budget battle and the “Turnaround Agenda”, and have had the ability to convert their participation into very successful online actions, including petitions to the Governor on ending the stalemate and targeted letters to legislators urging the override of the Governor’s veto on SB 1229, which would have prevented strikes and lockouts from crippling our state government.

Please check out our website and help us by signing our petition.

As we move into 2016, CA/IL is poised to take ILRW to the next level, adding a layer of grassroots activity and expanding our communications and social media presence to help battle back before the elections next fall.

#stayconnected with Citizen Action/Illinois:

Support Citizen Action! A contribution of $36 from you can help power us through 2016. Visit our easy contribution page to donate

Click Here to Donate
Another Victory on LGBT Rights!

Citizen Action/Illinois worked side by side with our partners Equality Illinois and Lambda Legal to advocate for House Bill 217, sponsored by Representative Kelly Cassidy and Senator Dan Biss. The bill, which bans the use of harmful “conversion therapy” practices on minors in an attempt to “change” their sexual orientation, was signed by the Governor in August. A widely discredited and traumatic process, Illinois became only the fourth state in the nation (and the first in the Midwest) to ban this practice legislatively.

Citizen Action/Illinois promoted the bill specifically from a consumer protection angle, with the chief argument being that this practice was not only harmful to individuals but fraudulent to consumers as well. Our advocacy focused intently on the Black and Latino Caucuses, along with select Republicans that were very much in tune with this issue due to vocal support for the ban in their districts. With these efforts combined, the bill passed the House and the Senate with bipartisan support.

Federal Work: Childhood Nutrition

Through our national organization, Citizen Action/Illinois partnered with Food Research Action Council in 2015 to advocate for an extension of the national summer meals program. In addition, we advocated for two bipartisan proposals that would improve access to the program by allowing more flexibility for rural and urban areas where it is more difficult for kids to eat on-site. Our efforts centered around convening long-time food and poverty advocates to share strategies, using social media tools to amplify their messages and to using our relationships with the IFT and IEA to generate letters to the editor from teachers about the importance of the nutrition programs on the learning potential of the students.

Illinois Alliance of Retired Americans (IARA)

It was a very busy year for the Illinois Alliance of Retired Americans. In March, the founding convention of IARA’s 501c4 organization was held in Chicago—nearly 80 members participated in the event. This fall, IARA had another transition as Jeanne Cameron took the position of Executive Director, replacing Emily Stewart, who led the alliance for over five years and helped build an organization with over 80 affiliates and 247,000 members across the state.

In programs, IARA held multiple events across the state to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Medicaid and Medicare; held press events with retirees across the state on the negative impacts of Governor Rauner’s proposed budget and lobbied legislators in Springfield to help protect vital services to the senior community.

Visit us on the web!
www.citizenaction-il.org

CITIZEN ACTION/ILLINOIS

27 East Monroe Street, Suite 1100
Chicago, Illinois 60603
P: (312) 427-2114
F: (312) 379-0313

Visit us on the web!
www.citizenaction-il.org