## **Governor Quinn Announces Best Contract for Taxpayers in Illinois History**

Written by Leslie Wertheimer Wednesday, 20 March 2013 09:08

Three-year Agreement Ratified by Union After Longest Negotiation in History

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Pat Quinn today praised the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Council 31 members' approval of the new union contract covering some 35,000 state employees. Negotiations took more than 15 months and the agreement was ratified by AFSCME members over the past two weeks. Today's development is part of the governor's commitment to restore fiscal stability to Illinois.

"This is the best contract for all taxpayers in Illinois history," Governor Pat Quinn said. "This contract recognizes the fact that the state is facing unprecedented financial challenges. I want to thank the members of AFSCME who approved the agreement and the women and men who negotiated at the table for more than a year to get this job done. Even in difficult times, the process can work. This is a win for all of our taxpayers and a win for state workers as we continue to move Illinois forward."

AFSCME announced ratification of the contract this evening. The approved agreement will result in \$900 million in healthcare savings over the life of the contract. The contract puts an end to free retiree healthcare in Illinois to ensure all retirees will begin paying a modest portion of their health insurance premiums starting July 1. In addition, the contract includes the most modest Cost of Living Adjustments in state history at a rate of 0 percent, 2 percent and 2 percent. Combined with step and longevity adjustments, this will total about \$200 million over the life of the contract. The contract calls for new hires to start three steps lower, which amounts to about 9 percent less starting salary, which will save taxpayers money for years to come.

The contract also settles the pay raise litigation that has been tied up in court. As part of the agreement, the union and the administration have agreed to seek approximately \$140 million in fiscal years 2012 and 2013 wages from the previous contract that were never appropriated.

This 15-month negotiation was the longest in the state's history.

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