

TUA NEWS RELEASE

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We Need More Details and Fewer Speeches, Gov. Rauner!

Chicago – Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner delivered his first budget address to the General Assembly today, allowing the first-term Republican an opportunity to outline his plan to address the financial catastrophe looming over the taxpayers of Illinois.

Taxpayers United of America's (TUA) director of operations, Jared Labell, said that today's speech was mostly a replay of Rauner's State of the State speech delivered just two weeks ago. "We were hoping that today's budget address would give some concrete indication of how Rauner intends to move forward with his goal of reforming the government of Illinois and improving the economic climate of the state, but he was heavy on flowery campaign rhetoric and short on substance."

"Rauner's speech continued to echo many of the same points he offered two weeks ago, but unfortunately, without further details of how his approach will make fiscal sense; not to mention gain the approval of the Madigan and Cullerton Democratic stronghold called the General Assembly." Labell continued, "Yet again, we will have to wait and see what the finalized budget proposal will look like on paper before we celebrate, and even then, we still have a long way to go."

Although many specifics of the governor's so-called 'Turnaround Budget' remained elusive following the speech, Labell was not entirely pessimistic about the opportunities ahead. "Rauner's general approach to reforming the government of Illinois is a positive step in the right direction, especially when compared to groups like the Civic Federation, which recently released its state budget analysis calling for six major tax increases totaling more than \$23 billion, plus billions in more expenditures."

"Rauner seems committed to finding a solution to the pension crisis in Illinois, a top priority of TUA for nearly a decade. In his speech, Rauner even referenced some of the figures we have published, including the fact that more than eleven thousand government retirees are collecting tax-free, six-figure pensions." Labell concluded, "The government pension system is unsustainable. Rauner and the General Assembly must address this fiasco first and foremost if they want to retain any credibility with the taxpayers who are forced to pay for this perpetual government boondoggle."