



Cal City legislator urges officials, residents to push for day care centers' funding rescue

CALUMET CITY | A south suburban state legislator wants the governor to do what he can to ensure day care centers receive all of the state funding they were anticipating for the fiscal year that ends June 30.

State Rep. Thaddeus Jones, D-Calumet City, is calling on his Calumet City colleagues and residents to encourage Gov. Pat Quinn to support a supplemental appropriations bill that would restore funding. Jones also serves as the city's 3rd Ward alderman.

Quinn on Tuesday said \$73 million in unspent funding was found in the state budget that could be used to replenish the state's Child Care Assistance Program. The money would give day care centers across Illinois the full amount of money they were expecting to receive in May and June.

But the governor needs legislative approval to allocate the money. Some legislators think Quinn is trying to take credit for a reported solution to the funding problem less than a week after a supplemental appropriations bill was introduced in the General Assembly.

About 40,000 day care providers learned by email May 1 that state government would halt sending funds to day care centers for the next two months because of its financial woes.

As of Friday, there were at least seven state representatives who had joined state Rep. Sara Feigenholtz, D-Chicago, as co-sponsors of her bill, which she introduced May 4.

Jones said he hoped the House and Senate would pass the supplemental appropriations bill quickly.

"Hopefully, it will get done (this) week," Jones said.

The bill that would provide the supplemental funding is pending in the Illinois House Rules Committee. The panel is responsible for assigning bills to the committees that ultimately review them for legislative consideration.

Jones said the bill would not receive legislative attention before Tuesday because the Senate and House canceled session activities for Monday.

That makes it virtually impossible for the bill to receive final approval before Wednesday — the day day care operators plan to protest the funding cuts outside the Statehouse in Springfield.

Day care operators have said they plan to show up in great numbers from across Illinois, and Jones said he expects quite a scene at the Capitol.

"It's going to be fiery when they come" to Springfield, he said.