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Civic Federation Position Statement on Senate Bill 3564

May 8, 2012

The Civic Federation opposes SB 3564, as amended, which would revise the State Facilities Closure Act and make it more difficult for the Governor to close State facilities.

SB 3564 would effectively establish that the Illinois General Assembly has administrative authority over the operations, restructuring and potential closures of correctional facilities and State centers for veterans, the mentally ill and the developmentally disabled. Under current law, proposed closures of these types of facilities are required to be reviewed by the General Assembly's Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability (COGFA). Current law gives COGFA 50 days after the filing of a recommendation by an executive branch officer in which to issue a non-binding advisory opinion.

In contrast, SB 3564, if enacted, would prevent any action on a proposed facility closure until after the General Assembly adopts a joint resolution affirming the proposed closure. The bill does not include any deadline for General Assembly action.

Referring to facility closure-related savings included in the Governor's proposed FY2013 budget, a fiscal note on SB 3564 filed by the Governor's Office of Management and Budget states that the bill could "severely minimize or even eliminate the cost reductions, thus leaving the affected agencies underfunded. In addition, not achieving these cost reductions would have a significant impact on the FY2013 budget as additional funding or reductions would have to be identified."

Given the State of Illinois' grave financial condition, deteriorating credit rating and critical need to rein in spending, this is not the time to limit the authority of the executive branch to take actions to improve the State's fiscal stability. The existing facility closure process allows for appropriate input by the public and by the legislature. SB3564 would permit excessive and unnecessary delays in carrying out the difficult but necessary financial and programmatic facility closures that are most appropriately the responsibility of the executive branch.