

County Board



Stronger Together

SERVICE EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
LOCAL 73
www.seiu73.org

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**SEIU Local 73 Written Testimony re. a response to
File #15-2421 – Opposing a Property Tax Increase in FY 2016**

My name is Christine Boardman, President of SEIU Local 73. We have 28,000 members and more than 15,000 of them work, live and vote within Cook County.

We believe that this move to freeze property taxes in FY2016, to be short sighted.

President Preckwinkle has not begun the FY 2016 budget process. I am sure that all of you are aware that Governor Bruce Rauner intends to cut revenue to local governments and the County by more than 50%. Governor Rauner's proposed reduction from the Local Government Distributive Fund would result in a loss of more than \$5 million dollars of State funding for Cook County. Additionally it would mean an additional loss of 133 million for the City of Chicago.

These drastic cuts to local governments, including Cook County will require all of us to work cooperatively to find new sources of revenue, and/or significantly reduce services vital to the public. This would include public safety, health in the Cook County Health and Hospital system.

Governor Rauner and his allies are promoting legislation that would require municipalities to file for bankruptcy. We do not want another Detroit here in Illinois. Filing for bankruptcy requires municipalities to replace democratically elected leadership with an appointed judge who will be tasked to pay off bond holders and other financial obligations instead of paying for the necessary public services that our electorate so badly needs.

Of the 11 revenue streams that generate the Cook County budget, property taxes only make up 15% of the total incoming revenue during the FY 2015 fiscal year. Respectfully, we are requesting that the freeze on property taxes be put off until the budget process actually begins. Let us not put the cart before the horse. I can only imagine the amount of layoffs that could be a result of such a move. Both within the corporate side as well as the CCHHS system, and public safety.

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We call upon you to fully consider other forms of revenue generation within Cook County.

There are 2.7 million registered voters in Cook County who elect our 17 Commissioners and the County Board President. President Preckwinkle has strived hard to make the budget work for Cook County. Passage of this resolution at this time is not the right time and can only mean that Cook County residents would be hurt.

We call upon you to hold up your part and allow for a fully democratic participatory process without limiting viable solutions. No one wants to see property taxes go up, but we need to take a close look at our revenue options. I thank you for your time.

In conclusion I want to note our support for Commissioner Fritchey's resolution opposing the creation of right to work zones in Illinois.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Christine Boardman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Christine Boardman, President SEIU Local 73