



## **Gov Rauner Faces New Challenge In ‘Fair Share’ Fight**

**By Connor D. Wolf**

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The attorney general of Illinois challenged Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner Monday on a recent lawsuit aimed at ending fair share union dues for government workers in the state.

In February, after only a month of being in office, Rauner went after fair share dues in two ways. He ordered state agencies to stop collecting them while also filing a federal lawsuit to end the state law that requires them. Fair share is a fee nonunion employees must pay to the union to cover the costs of collective bargaining.

After the executive order and lawsuit, Rauner was quickly attacked by labor unions and other left leaning groups. Democratic Attorney General Lisa Madigan is now moving to dismiss the federal lawsuit.

“I have submitted a motion to dismiss the case, arguing that the governor does not have the legal authority . . . to challenge the law in federal court,” Madigan said in a statement to the Chicago Sun-Times.

“As attorney general, it is my job to represent the state and defend our laws when their constitutionality is challenged in court,” she continued. “Because the governor’s case questions the validity of the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act, I moved to intervene to provide the court with arguments regarding the law’s constitutionality.”

The governor’s office was quick to respond by noting Rauner is in the right and that the challenge will not have an effect.

“As expected, the attorney general filed a motion in federal court to defend so-called ‘fair share’ union dues in state government, which is why the governor pro-actively asked the attorney general’s office to allow the governor’s office to use pro bono outside counsel,” the governor’s office told the Chicago Sun-Times. “The attorney general’s actions will have no impact on the

governor's efforts to protect taxpayers and state employees who don't want to pay forced union dues.”

Prior to the executive order, Rauner had pointed towards prevailing wage laws and project labor agreements as some of the few examples of how labor unions are hurting the state through unfair laws.

Project labor agreements are deals between owners of construction projects and construction unions in which firms must enter into collective bargaining with a union, hire workers through the union and pay union wages and benefits. In government contracting, a prevailing wage is the hourly wage, benefits and overtime that must be paid to the majority of workers within a particular area.

According to a report by the libertarian Cato Institute, project labor agreements alone can add 12 to 18 percent to the cost of public projects.

Rauner hopes that reforming labor policy and unions will allow the state to overcome some major economic obstacles that have hindered progress in recent years. According to The Illinois Policy Institute, the state is struggling in jobs and education, two areas vital to economic growth and stability.

“Illinois’ low standing for total job growth is unusual given that Illinois has the largest population in the Midwest and the fifth largest nationally,” the Institute noted in a report for 2014. “It takes a particularly toxic combination of bad policy and corrupt dealings to hinder such a large and talented workforce from keeping up with the likes of Kentucky and Connecticut.”

“Illinois tracks last of all states for private-sector job creation in 2014, one of only four states to be negative for jobs on the year,” the report added.