



Office of the Governor
207 State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois 62706

March 10, 2010

To the Honorable Members of the General Assembly and the People of the State of Illinois:

I respectfully submit to you the Fiscal Year 2011 Operating Budget, a \$24.8 billion general funds plan that is based on the very real conditions we all face here in our great state. With this budget, we are FIGHTING FOR ILLINOIS: fighting for jobs to revive our economy, fighting to cut costs while meeting our obligations, and fighting for our families' futures. This budget is the result of difficult but responsible decisions we must make during this unprecedented time in Illinois history. The national recession is the longest and deepest since the Great Depression. This, along with poor fiscal discipline by previous administrations, has left us in a dire financial situation.

In Illinois, we are facing a record \$13 billion deficit for fiscal years 2010 and 2011. We need immediate, decisive and comprehensive action to solve this structural deficit. A combination of spending reductions, federal assistance, strategic borrowing, revenue generation and job growth is imperative to balancing our budget and imposing fiscal discipline.

Responsibility is critical in times like these. We must tighten our belts in areas throughout state government. This budget makes major reforms by reducing spending and takes serious action on issues that have been neglected for far too long, such as our pension system. While tough decisions have been made, we will continue to maintain our commitment to our most vulnerable citizens and the essential services upon which they rely.

I stand for and am committed to honesty, openness and transparency in the people's government. For the first time in our state's history, Illinois residents have the chance to actively participate in shaping our budget priorities through the Governor's Office of Management and Budget Web site, www.budget.illinois.gov. The overwhelming response demonstrates that people want to and will become engaged in the budget process when given the opportunity. Thousands of residents provided smart, sound and common sense solutions to solving our current budget crisis. We thank all of you who responded.

I am the Building Governor and I know this state will recover from this fiscal crisis by putting people back to work. At 11.3 percent, our unemployment rate is unacceptable. The \$31 billion capital plan - *Illinois Jobs Now!* - is a job-generating, capital improvement program that is reviving the state's ailing economy by creating and retaining more than 439,000 Illinois jobs. At the same time, this plan is building schools; fixing aging roads and bridges; improving mass transit; and investing in energy, the environment and our future.

Together, we can, must and will move forward to the promising days ahead. The future will be built on a more dynamic economy driven by a shared focus on the great, hard-working people of Illinois. The task before us will not be easy, but I am confident we have the right plan to meet the challenges ahead. Let us work together and make this Land of Lincoln proud and prosperous once again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pat Quinn".

Pat Quinn
Governor, State of Illinois