

Illinois Appellate Court orders Rauner Administration to submit plan to resume payment of step increases to state employees

The Illinois Labor Relations Board ordered the Department of Central Management Services to submit by July 30 a plan to provide back pay to approximately 15,000 state employees illegally denied wage step increases since 2015. The order follows an Illinois Appellate Court's decision holding step increases should have been paid to state employees.

The Rauner Administration had, the Court said, committed an unfair labor practice by unilaterally imposing contract terms on employees that did not include step increases. The Rauner Administration argued that they were at an impasse with AFSCME in collective bargaining negotiations, thus allowing them to impose unilateral terms. The Rauner Administration sought appeal to the Illinois Supreme Court following the Appellate Court's decision, but their petition was denied. A separate case addressing the issue of whether the parties are at impasse is pending before a state appeals court, but will likely be decided by the Illinois Supreme Court.

The payout will benefit approximately 40% of Illinois's 38,000-member AFSCME bargaining unit. The Court ordered that the back wages payout must include a 7% annual interest rate. "Bruce Rauner has wronged employees for more than three years, preventing the movement through the step plan that was one of the conditions on which they were hired," Roberta Lynch, executive director of Council 31, said in a statement. "We appreciate the Labor Board's decisive action on this matter. It's far past time for the governor to place every employee on the appropriate step and make them whole for all losses incurred since 2015."

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