

One-Page Summary: CitizenHelton United Illinois Governance Accountability Act of 2026 (Enhanced Version)

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Date: November 26, 2025

Purpose: This summary distills the rewritten bill into a concise overview, highlighting its fiscal reforms to address Illinois' \$201 billion pension crisis, \$267 million FY2026 deficit, and structural spending bloat. As a 22-year Revenue Committee veteran who balanced budgets through the 2008 recession and FY2026 close, I confirm: This isn't tinkering—it's a roadmap to solvency, generating \$3.5–\$4.5 billion annually in revenues/savings by 2030 while protecting families.

Step 1: Core Intent – Fiscal Equity and Stability (Sections 1–4, 6–8)

The Act promotes “fair share” reforms to end gridlock and waste. Unchanged foundations include:

- Illinois Compromise Commission (Sec. 2): Bipartisan panel for transparent budget talks.
- Automatic Appropriations & Emergency Powers (Secs. 3–4, 7): Ensures operations during impasses; limits executive overreach.
- Citizen Database (Sec. 6): Public bill-tracking tool. Reasoning: Builds trust—65% of voters back anti-gridlock measures (2024 polls)—without new spending.

Step 2: Revenue Boost – Protecting Families, Targeting Wealth (Section 5)

Amends Income Tax Act for tiered surcharges on high earners (post-2027): 1% over \$750K single/\$1M joint; +1.5% over \$5M/\$10M; +0.5% over \$10M/\$20M (for pensions). Yields \$1.1–\$1.4B/year to Pension Stabilization Fund (until 100% funded; then debt payoff). 10% (~\$110M) to Economic Diversification.

- Family Shields: +\$250/dependent exemption; EITC to 25% of federal; inflation-indexed personal exemptions. Reasoning: Nets \$900M–\$1.2B after offsets; counters migration (Illinois lost 67K residents in 2024) via audits. Equitable—top 1% (25% of income) pays more, 80% of filers untouched.

Step 3: Pension Overhaul – From Crisis to Security (Section 9)

Permanently enhances Tier 3 hybrid for new hires (3% COLA DB + 7% employer cash-balance). Voluntary Tier 2 upgrades. \$20M/year AI for fraud detection. Auto-transfers excess surcharges over \$900M.

- New: Tier 1 Trigger (e): Caps 3% COLA at 1.5% if funding <80%; opt-out lump-sum buyouts (5% benefit) funded by 0.5% surcharge/AI savings. Reasoning: Tackles 70% of liability (Tier 1); shaves \$1.5B/year without “irreducible” clause violations. Accelerates 100% funding to 2045 (vs. 2060 baseline).

Step 4: Efficiency Engines – Curbing Bloat, Sparking Growth (Sections 2.1, 9.5, 10–11)

- Spending Cap (2.1): Limits appropriations to CPI + population (~2.5%); supermajority exceptions; auto-5% cuts on violations (exempts essentials). Saves \$800M/year.
- Medicaid Containment (9.5): 20% value-based payments; CPI rate caps by 2028. \$500M savings auto-to pensions; biennial audits.
- Diversification (10b): \$100M credits for downstate tech/manufacturing (50 jobs/\$1M); rural focus.

- Broadband/Housing (Secs. 10–11): Unchanged incentives for access/affordability. Reasoning: Healthcare (28% of budget) and spending creep (3.2% FY2026 growth) are silent killers—efficiencies yield \$1.3B/year. Credits boost GDP 0.5%, adding \$300M organic taxes.

Step 5: Safeguards & Timeline (Sections 12–14)

- Fiscal Certification (12): Independent bill analyses.
- Severability (13): Protects core if challenged.
- Effective: Immediate for caps; 2027 for taxes/pensions/Medicaid/diversification. Impact Projection: Covers FY2026 deficit 10x over; 70% pension funding by 2035. Bipartisan appeal: “Fair taxes, no waste.”