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**Casino bill sent to Quinn;**

**Gambling in Chicago, four other sites OKd; slots at racetracks**

By Dave McKinney and Stephen Di Benedetto

Staff reporters

SPRINGFIELD - Illinois lawmakers Tuesday ended a plodding, spring legislative session with a bang by sending Gov. Pat Quinn legislation authorizing a Chicago casino, raising electricity rates and, on a second try, changing how injured workers get compensated.

Racing toward a midnight adjournment deadline, the state Senate also gave final approval to Democratic-drawn congressional map that could wind up in court, but both chambers could not resolve a $400-million-plus budget dispute that may necessitate bringing lawmakers back to Springfield.

If that whir of activity wasn't enough, fisticuffs broke out at one point late Tuesday on the staid Senate floor in a dispute triggered by a GOP senator's criticism of a Democratic senator's lobbyist father.

The day's biggest news involved the Senate's 30-27 vote in favor of a massive gambling expansion that would lead to casinos in Chicago, the south suburbs, Lake County and downstate, plus permit slot machines at racetracks and, possibly, the city's two airports.

The plan, sought by Mayor Rahm Emanuel and sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Terry Link (D-Vernon Hills), faces an uncertain future with Quinn. While supportive of a city casino, the governor has repeatedly expressed opposition in recent weeks to "top-heavy" gambling expansion.

But the new mayor, in his first month in office with a huge legislative win, was effusive.

"Today's vote brings us one step closer to a significant victory for job creation and economic growth in Chicago," Emanuel said in a prepared statement.

If gambling was the day's biggest headline-grabber, the most surprising development involved the House's 62-43 vote in support of a workers compensation package that had failed Sunday. But it was revived by House Speaker Michael Madigan (D-Chicago), handing another victory to Emanuel and to Quinn, who each lobbied for the bill.

The measure had failed in the House Sunday by a 55-39 vote, dealing a setback to what had been one of the top spring priorities for Springfield's ruling Democrats, who wanted a pro-business vote after orchestrating a 46-percent increase in the corporate income tax rate in January.

The cornerstone of the legislation, a 30-percent reduction in fees that businesses must pay to doctors, would save companies between $500 million and $700 million.

All but one Republican - Rep. Chris Nybo (R-Elmhurst) - voted against the measure, arguing it failed to give employers adequate safeguards against workers seeking compensation for injuries that don't occur in the workplace.

"The person who plays football on Sunday afternoon gets hurt and goes to work on Monday and says he has a workers compensation injury, we don't address that, the very meat and potatoes of what we need to do," complained House Minority Leader Tom Cross (R-Oswego).

In another major vote, the Senate voted 31-24 to narrowly approve a push by Commonwealth Edison to raise electricity rates by 2.5 percent to invest in its aging power grid, a plan that faces a certain veto from the governor.

The governor's office renewed its opposition to the bill shortly after its passage.

"The Illinois Senate today chose to let the electric utilities lock in guaranteed, large profits at the expense of Illinois' businesses and working," Quinn spokesman Grant Klinzman said.

Under the plan, the utility would be guaranteed 2.5-percent rate hikes through 2014 - about $3 per month for a typical ComEd customer - to help underwrite a $1.5 billion, 10-year modernization of ComEd's grid.

During Senate floor debate, much of the opposition focused on the rate hikes that are part of the package, which was pushed by an armada of ComEd lobbyists, including Jacobs' father, former state Sen. Denny Jacobs (D-East Moline).

Other concerns included the $70,000 in recent campaign contributions to the Democratic leadership from ComEd's parent, Exelon Corp.

"I know it's just the way we do things, and it's just the way Illinois politics is, but $70,000 [was] given by Ameren just this month to funds controlled by the legislative leadership ... The sponsor's father is a registered lobbyist, lobbying for, who else, but ComEd," said Sen. Kyle McCarter (R-Lebanon), who voted against the plan.

Jacobs, chairman of the Senate Energy Committee, displayed irritation at the injection of his father and the campaign contributions into floor debate and insisted he personally had nothing to hide.

"You can look under my underwear. I don't care where you look. But the fact is I support this," Jacobs said, jarred by McCarter's reference to his father.

Afterward, Jacobs and McCarter got into a fight on the Senate floor and had to be separated.

"He stood in front of my desk while I was completing a bill...then he proceeded to verbally just curse at me, then he punched me in the chest with his fist," McCarter told the Chicago Sun-Times. "It's totally inexcusable. I think the citizens expect more." Shortly before midnight, McCarter said he filed a complaint against Jacobs with the Secretary of State Police, who provide security at the Capitol.

Offering a different account, Jacobs demanded an apology from McCarter, whom Jacobs said "came at me."

"If he wanted to say something about me, that's one thing. For him to attack my family members, that's out of bounds," Jacobs said, holding a copy of the Senate rules book that bars personality-laden debate. "In effect, what he's saying is I'm a 50-year-old man that does whatever my father tells me, which is a bunch of crap."