

May 30, 1997, FRIDAY, FINAL MARKETS

**Senate panel kills school-funding bill**

By Dave McKinney and Scott Fornek

SPRINGFIELD-A Republican-led Senate panel squashed Gov. Edgar's school-funding plan today as Senate President James "Pate" Philip scurried to line up support for an alternative.

By a party-line 6-4 vote, the Senate Revenue Committee moved to kill Edgar's proposed 25 percent income-tax hike, preventing it from reaching the floor of the Senate, where the governor believes it could pass.

After the proposal passed the House Thursday, Edgar immediately began lobbying Philip to allow the bill to bypass the Senate's committee structure, where the governor knew the proposal likely would be voted down.

Earlier today, the Wood Dale Republican indicated the only route for Edgar's bill to reach the floor was through the GOP-dominated committee, where all six Republicans wound up railing against the governor's approach.

"It's up to the committee (the bill) is assigned to," Philip said. "I'm going to treat it exactly the way the House did. It goes to . . . committee, and we'll see what the committee does."

The governor continued to express hope. "We have no less than 33 hours to resolve an issue that has been with us for many, many years," Edgar said. "I would hope Sen. Philip would remove his resistance to the bill."

Philip said he was attempting to draw his 31-member caucus behind a proposal that would not include an income-tax hike. Early today, senators appeared focused on a $ 459 million plan that includes taxes on riverboats and on faxes, beepers and voice mail.

"I have an alternative plan, but I don't have 30 votes for it yet. I'm working on it," Philip said.

Sen. Arthur Berman (D-Chicago), a longtime education advocate, scolded Philip if the Senate president holds to his threat of not allowing Edgar's plan to advance despite today's vote.

"He is saying to the governor, his governor, and to the Democrats, and the majority of people, I believe, and 700,000 children in Illinois, 'I don't care about you. We're not going to do anything,' " Berman said.

But Sen. Peter Fitzgerald (R-Inverness) defended the vote, saying Edgar's tax-increase plan offered no guarantees of lasting property-tax relief.