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**'Doomsday budget' defeated in lopsided Statehouse vote**

By Dave McKinney

Springfield bureau chief

SPRINGFIELD - A so-called "doomsday budget" filled with spending cuts went down in dramatic fashion Friday, drawing only five "yes" votes and thrusting the whole debate over a 2015 state spending plan up for grabs one week away from an adjournment deadline.

A $34.8 billion package was put up on the board in the House early Friday and drew only minimal debate before members rejected the plan by a 5-107 vote.

The plan, sponsored by Rep. Fred Crespo, D-Hoffman Estates, was cast as an alternative spending approach since a bid to extend the 2011 temporary income tax permanently drew only 34 House Democratic votes during an informal poll taken earlier this week by House Speaker Michael Madigan, D-Chicago.

"You've got to be for something, folks," Crespo said before the vote.

Crespo was joined by Madigan; Rep. Toni Berrios, D-Chicago; Rep. John Bradley, D-Marion; and Rep. Ken Dunkin, D-Chicago.

The spending plan Crespo and Madigan's other budgetary lieutenants put together contained $1.4 billion in spending cuts, leaving elementary and secondary education with $570 million less than this year, $365 million less for human services and $255 million less in public safety.

Republicans stayed off the bill, with one lawmaker recounting and ridiculing Gov. Pat Quinn's earlier threats that there would be "extreme and radical" cuts to education, schools would "starve," and hundreds of ailing veterans would be jettisoned from state veteran's homes.

"The truth is, Illinois is spending less, billions less," said Rep. David Harris, R-Arlington Heights. "Now, I do not understand how a general revenue fund increase from $27 billion four years ago to $36 billion this year, and we've spent every penny, how that can be called 'spending less.' So, you know what I think of these words the governor spoke? Horsefeathers. Absolute horsefeathers."

Quinn wasn't in Springfield for Friday morning's budget vote. He was in Chicago, having breakfast with President Barack Obama.

What exactly happens next remains unclear since state lawmakers now head into the long Memorial Day weekend without a clear sense of what a Fiscal 2015 budget will look like.

After the vote, Madigan told reporters that he would continue to lobby among his members for extending existing income tax rates that are set to expire in January, but he offered no signs he had enlisted more House Democrats than the 34 who said earlier this week they'd support a tax extension.

"I'm going to continue to work for the extension of the income tax increase because my view is the state does need more money to support the programs that are offered by the state. But 34 is a long way away from 60," the speaker said.

Democrats who control the House and Senate have until May 31 to pass a budget plan with simple majority votes, but that threshold jumps to a three-fifths count if the budget wrangling goes into June without a resolution, potentially putting Republicans into play.