

Mayor Lightfoot Tells State Lawmakers City Needs Casino – CBS Chicago

Written by Administrator

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SPRINGFIELD, III. (CBS) — Mayor Lori Lightfoot showed her hand in Springfield Tuesday, telling state lawmakers the city needs a casino to help solve its massive [budget hole](#).

As CBS 2 Political Investigator Dana Kozlov reported, there were no clear wins for the mayor in her visit to the state capital. But the mayor said one has to play the long game, and this visit was a way for lawmakers to get to know her and what she needs for Chicago.

Lightfoot emerged from a meeting of state House Democrats from some humor.

“I see all my friends are here,” she said.

Lightfoot also had little doubt that hopes for a revenue-raising [real estate transfer tax](#) are all but dead.

“We continue to have, I think, productive conversations with legislators and with the coalition,” Lightfoot said. “We’ll see what’s possible.”

The mayor made her second trip to Springfield since taking office to put out feelers about that tax, and focus on striking a deal for a future Chicago casino.

The casino is needed for future pension-related budget dollars. The transfer tax is needed to fill a \$50 million hole in her budget for next year. But the mayor says she has a backup plan, [albeit vague](#).

“Our focus has been on trying to avoid a property tax increase if that’s necessary, so we put an alternative in, depending on what happens on here, but it’s a series of cuts,” Lightfoot said.

Many lawmakers, including suburban Republicans, said a transfer tax is out of the question.

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“We have to cut spending in the state, not raise taxes,” said state Rep. David McSweeney (R-Cary). “I’m voting against a real estate transfer tax if it comes to the floor.”

McSweeney said there is no bill being considered yet for a real estate transfer tax. But a casino is still in the cards.

One factor is how the south suburbs might benefit. Another is keeping casino taxes at a level that attracts a builder.

It’s all part of the mayor’s sell.

“I think the mayor was very persuasive, she’s very good at laying out her argument, and she made a lot of really good points,” said state Rep. Ann Williams (D-Chicago).

“I’m a blank piece of paper to many of them, and I think it’s important for me to come and speak for what we need in the city of Chicago and not just do it by phone,” Lightfoot said.

Gov. J.B. Pritzker also met with the mayor on Tuesday and called the meeting productive. Mayor Lightfoot also met with legislative leaders.

Lightfoot will head back to Chicago on Tuesday night, but the fall veto session continues throughout the week in Springfield.

Read more <https://chicago.cbslocal.com/2019/11/12/mayor-lightfoot-chicago-casino-springfield/>