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Quinn: Hike tax or slash spending 37%

By Greg Hinz
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(Crain's) — Gov. Pat Quinn brought a dire message to a downtown civic club Monday: If he doesn't get his budget, state spending will have to be cut 37%.

That would mean, among other things:

- 14,300 public school teachers would be laid off, a \$1.5-billion cut.
- 400,000 college students would lose scholarship aid in a \$554-million reduction.
- 650,000 people would lose health care benefits in cuts totaling \$1.2 billion.
- 271,000 seniors would not be taken care of in the wake of \$368 million worth of reductions, cutting things like the state Department on Aging's Circuit Breaker program, and services to help seniors remain in their homes and fight elderly abuse.
- 6,000 prisoners would be let out of jail early.
- \$769 million in human services cuts would mean 5,000 disabled people would lose home care services and 45,000 people would no longer get addiction treatment and prevention.
- Mass transit cuts of \$549 million would eliminate all public funding for public transit and Amtrak.
- Local aid to state government would be cut \$1 billion.
- Another \$1 billion in cuts have yet to be determined.

Greg Hinz blog

If you want to get something done in government, declare a crisis — preferably a good one. Gov. Quinn certainly took that old political adage to heart Monday, unveiling his first full-length slasher production.

[Read more on Greg's blog.](#)

Mr. Quinn's speech to the City Club of Chicago comes just two weeks before the General Assembly is expected to wrap up its work in Springfield. He wants lawmakers to pass a budget that includes a 50% increase in the state income tax rate 4.5%, up from 3%, to help close a budget deficit of \$12 billion.

The cuts he detailed in his speech total about \$7 billion.

The governor also wants lawmakers to pass ethics reform measures in the wake of the scandals that ousted his predecessor, former Gov. Rod Blagojevich, from office.

(The Associated Press contributed to this report.)