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*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

USS Illinois Commissioning Committee to be joined by U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk and Gov. Bruce Rauner TODAY at 2 p.m. to Recognize Public & Private Support for Historic Ship

WHAT: The USS Illinois (SNN-786) Commissioning Committee to be joined by U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk and Gov. Bruce Rauner at Navy Pier to acknowledge significant public and private sector support for the historic naval ship – USS Illinois.

WHEN: TODAY, Wednesday, April 1

TIME: 2 p.m.

WHERE: Navy Pier

Lakeview Terrace (located near Navy Pier's east end)

600 E. Grand Ave.

**Media Parking available near Navy Pier's east end at Entrance 2*

ADDITIONAL DETAILS:

The USS Illinois Commissioning Committee will discuss the significant support received for the first naval ship since 1897 to carry the name "Illinois." Circuit Judge John Curry will also present a classic framed photograph of the original USS Illinois to the Commanding Officer where it will reside on board the ship's wardroom for the next 35 years, reminding the crew of their Illinois heritage. Midshipmen from local Naval ROTC units will perform color guard duties for the ceremony.

ABOUT THE USS ILLINOIS (SSN-786)

The USS ILLINOIS is one and one third football fields long (377 feet), has a hull diameter of 34 feet, a draft of 32 feet on the surface and displaces 7300 tons submerged. It is an advance stealth multi-mission nuclear-powered submarine capable of deep ocean warfare as well as littoral (shallow water) operations. Its weapons systems include conventional torpedoes, Tomahawk and Harpoon submerged launch missiles. It can deliver an entire platoon of Navy SEALs at one time while submerged. The nuclear reactor needs no refueling for 40 years, so the ship is only restricted by food and crew morale for its time submerged at sea. It carries a crew of 136.

The USS ILLINOIS Commissioning Committee was formed from volunteers throughout the state and is led by the Navy League of the United States, Aurora Council, to help honor Illinois' newest namesake ship. The USS ILLINOIS is scheduled to be launched June 27, 2015 and commissioned on December 20, 2015.