



Illinois Reform Commission

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For Immediate Release

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ILLINOIS REFORM COMMISSION UNVEILS 100-DAY REPORT

CHICAGO (April 28, 2009) – The Illinois Reform Commission (IRC) issued its 100-day report today, recommending a wide range of ethics reforms in six key areas: campaign finance; procurement; enforcement; government structure; transparency; and inspiring better government. Since its inception, the IRC has held eight public hearings and seven town hall meetings throughout the State to hear expert testimony and receive public input relating to a host of ethics reform issues.

The Commission previously issued a preliminary report that contained its initial "pay to play" recommendations on March 31, 2009. Today's report contains a comprehensive discussion and overview of *all* of the Commission's recommendations, as well as the research and findings that support its conclusions. In announcing the IRC's proposals today, Mr. Collins said, "I want to thank my fellow Commissioners for their focused and passionate service to the state over these last 100 days. We have done our best to be comprehensive and objective in our review and to propose reforms that we believe will have a meaningful impact on the culture of corruption that has infected our State." Mr. Collins added, "The baton is now passed to the Governor, the legislature, and the public to discuss, debate, and ultimately enact meaningful ethics reform by May 31, 2009."

The Commission thanks Governor Pat Quinn for permitting it to function independently and to bring these recommendations directly to the public.

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The proposals announced today include the following:

I. Campaign Finance

To bring greater transparency to the campaign finance process and to reduce the skyrocketing costs of election campaigns in Illinois, the Commission recommends:

- A. expanding disclosure requirements for campaign contributions to include:
 - Year-round “real time” reporting of contributions,
 - Mandatory disclosure of “bundlers” who collect contributions from others, and
 - Mandatory disclosure of large “independent” expenditures made by individuals to promote a candidate;
- B. limiting campaign contributions to:
 - \$2,400 for individuals, and
 - \$5,000 for political committees;
- C. banning outright contributions from lobbyists and trusts;
- D. extending the “Pay to Play” ban by forbidding vendors with large state contracts from contributing to members of the legislature;
- E. establishing a pilot project for public financing of judicial elections in 2010;
- F. strengthening ISBE enforcement of campaign laws and greater transparency of ISBE sanctions and proceedings; and
- G. moving primary elections closer to general elections to reduce length of campaign and resulting costs.

II. Procurement

To help cure state procurement abuse in Illinois, the Commission recommends:

- A. insulating the state procurement officials from political pressure and making them independent;
- B. cutting back loopholes and exemptions in Procurement Code;
- C. applying the Procurement Code to legislative, judicial branches and quasi-governmental agencies;
- D. subjecting no-bid and “emergency” contracts to much tighter scrutiny and limitations;
- E. establishing an Independent Contract Monitor to oversee and review contracts; and
- F. creating greater transparency in the procurement process including:

- Disclosure of subcontractors,
- Disclosure of all lobbyists and agents representing vendors,
- Documenting any contact between vendors/agents and procurement staff, and
- Providing public access to all procurement information on one website.

III. Enforcement

The Commission recommends that the ability of state law enforcement to investigate and prosecute corruption be enhanced by:

- A. amending and enhancing state laws to provide prosecutors and investigators with many of the same tools available to federal authorities;
- B. adding significant corruption offenses to the existing list of offenses that are non-probationable;
- C. granting the Illinois Attorney General the authority to independently conduct grand jury investigations of public corruption offenses;
- D. directing additional resources to the investigation of public corruption crimes, by creating an independent public corruption division within the Illinois State Police; and
- E. modifying the laws applicable to Inspectors General's Offices to improve the ability of Inspectors General to independently conduct investigations.

IV. Government Structure

To address structural problems that enable and produce corruption and inefficiency in state government, the Commission recommends:

- A. adopting legislation to restore fairness to the process by which state legislative and congressional districts are drawn;
- B. supporting pending legislation regarding term limits for legislative leadership positions;
- C. amending House and Senate Rules applicable to the budget approval process to restore an effective system of checks and balances; and
- D. amending the House and Senate Rules to ensure that each piece of proposed legislation that has a minimum number of sponsors receives a full committee vote.

V. Transparency

To improve and enhance the transparency of State government, the Commission recommends:

- A. applying Open Meetings Act to General Assembly;
- B. adopting presumption in favor of disclosure in FOIA requests;

- C. reducing exemptions to FOIA and Open Meetings Act so that citizens have greater access and knowledge of government records and decision-making;
- D. enhancing the penalties for violation of FOIA and Open Meetings Act requirements;
- E. establishing an Independent Office of Transparency to provide training and ensure compliance with FOIA and OMA requirements; and
- F. greatly expanding and enhancing the use of modern technology to improve disclosure, reporting and collaboration in state government.

VI. Inspiring Better Government

The Commission proposes the following reforms to inspire all state government workers and restore citizens' confidence in the integrity of State government:

- A. combating patronage by reforming the personnel system to better protect a-political positions and the employees who hold them;
- B. reforming the State's hiring process;
- C. establishing a code to guide everyday decision-making and holding state employees accountable for abiding by the code;
- D. revising the ethics training system to improve state employees' understanding of relevant ethical standards;
- E. more clearly defining whistleblower protections to ensure and expand coverage for state employees; and
- F. creating additional safeguards to protect against ethical violations by those exiting state employment.

About Illinois Reform Commission:

The Illinois Reform Commission was established to examine government practices and re-evaluate its processes in order to clean up our state's government. This 15-seat commission includes professional expertise and experience in business, law enforcement, government, education, military, and not-for-profit community groups.

For more information about the Commission and for a copy of the Commission's full report, please visit <http://www.reformillinoisnow.org>.

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