



Illinois Reform Commission

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For Immediate Release

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ILLINOIS REFORM COMMISSION UNVEILS “PAY TO PLAY” PROPOSALS

CHICAGO (March 31, 2009) – The Illinois Reform Commission (IRC), headed by former federal prosecutor Patrick Collins, announced today a series of reform proposals covering campaign finance, procurement, enforcement and transparency. Since its inception, the IRC has held six public hearings and five town hall meetings throughout the State to hear expert testimony and receive public input relating to a host of ethics reforms issues. In announcing the IRC’s proposals today, Mr. Collins said, “Today, the Commission is presenting a series of substantive proposals to change the ‘pay to play’ system that has dominated Illinois politics for too long.” Mr. Collins added that “Through our hearings, town hall meetings and website, we have heard the voice of a public that is demanding change -- demanding accountability -- demanding reform. We urge the Governor and the Legislature to listen to that collective voice.” The Commission will continue through the end of April and additional recommendations will be forthcoming after further Commission hearings.

The proposals announced today include the following:

I. Campaign Finance

- 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
 - Mandatory disclosure of large “independent” expenditures made by individuals to promote a candidate

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- B. Limiting campaign contributions to:
 - \$2,400 for individuals
 - \$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
- G. Moving primary elections closer to general elections to reduce length of campaign and resulting costs

II. Procurement

- 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 Independent Contract Monitor to oversee and review contracts
- F. Creating greater transparency in the procurement process including
 - Disclosure of subcontractors
 - Disclosure of all lobbyists and agents representing vendors
 - Any contact between vendors/agents and procurement staff to be documented
 - All procurement information to be available publicly on one website

III. Enforcement

- A. Enhancing state law enforcement ability to investigate and prosecute corruption by –

- authorizing one-party consent to recordings in criminal investigations with approval of the prosecutor
- amending Illinois law to include corruption-related offenses as predicates for wiretaps

IV. Transparency

- A. Applying Open Meetings Act to General Assembly
- B. Adopting presumption in favor of disclosure in FOIA requests
- C. Improving FOIA and Open Meetings Act training for state employees and strictly enforcing deadlines for compliance with FOIA requests
- D. Conducting comprehensive review and utilize enhanced technology to “shine the light” on all government agencies and processes

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 experiences in business, law enforcement, government, education, military, and not-for-profit community groups. The Commission is to submit recommendations for legislative reform to Governor Patrick Quinn by April 27, 2009.

For more information about the Commission, please visit
<http://www.reformillinoisnow.org/meetings.php>

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