



Illinois Reform Commission

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For Immediate Release

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ILLINOIS REFORM COMMISSION'S MARCH 13 CHICAGO HEARING TO ADDRESS "PAY TO PLAY" REFORM PROPOSALS

CHICAGO (March 12, 2009) – The Illinois Reform Commission (IRC) will hold its next public hearing in Chicago, Illinois on Friday, March 13, 2009 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. to address “pay to play” abuses involving State contracts and to consider procurement reform proposals. The hearing will take place at the Chicago Bar Association, 321 S. Plymouth Court, Chicago.

The Commission will hear from:

- Witnesses with first-hand knowledge of "pay to play" abuses in Illinois including a former state official pressured to steer contracts to particular vendors and one of the lead federal agents in the investigation of former Governor George Ryan;
- Two of the leading proponents of procurement reform in the Illinois General Assembly over the last 15 years, Senator Jeff Schoenberg (IL-9th District) and former Senator Steve Rauschenberger (IL-22nd District); and
- Former WLS-TV political reporter Andy Shaw, who covered state and local politics for more than 25 years and reported on the alleged pay-to-play abuses during the Blagojevich administration; and
- Experts with experience in “best practices” procurement reform measures around the country.

The hearing will be moderated by IRC Commissioners David Hoffman, Inspector General for the City of Chicago, and Pamela Davis, CEO of Edward Hospital in Naperville, who was a whistleblower in the federal investigation pay-to-play crimes by Stuart Levine, Tony Rezko, and others.

“Pay to play’ has had a strong hold on Illinois, and this is the time to try to break its grip,” said Commissioners Hoffman and Davis. “We will be hearing from an excellent group of speakers on this issue – from those who can tell us what ‘pay to play’ looks like on the inside, to those who have worked on reforms in the past, to those who have seen the best ideas implemented outside of Illinois. Our hope is that this hearing will lead us toward a set of bold reforms that will make it much more difficult for corruption to flourish when the State awards contracts.”

Patrick Collins, the IRC’s Chairman, said, “Following our review of potential campaign finance reforms – the "pay" side – we look forward to tackling the procurement piece – the "play" side – of the dirty equation.”

The following individuals are among those expected to address the Commission during the March 13 meeting:

- Karl Becker, Former Deputy Director of Finance at the Illinois Department of Corrections
- Michael Bevis, Chief Procurement Officer, City of Naperville; Board of Directors, National Institute of Government Purchasing, Inc. (NIGP)
- Basil Demczak, Supervisory Postal Inspector, U.S. Postal Inspection Service

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- Christopher Mazzella, Inspector General, Miami-Dade County
- Steve Rauschenberger, former Illinois State Senator, President of the United Republican Fund
- Jeff Schoenberg, Illinois State Senator
- Andy Shaw, former political reporter for WLS-TV
- Christopher Yukins, Associate Professor of Government Contracts Law, Co-Director of the Government Procurement Law Program at George Washington University Law School

Members of the public and media are invited to attend. For more information about the Commission and the topic of procurement, please visit <http://www.reformillinoisnow.org/meetings.php>

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