



ILLINOIS REFORM COMMISSION
Monday, March 30, 2009

Government Structure Comments from Website and Other Sources

As of Thursday, March 19, the Illinois Reform Commission has received 1137 comments, through www.reformillinoisnow.org. We have also received 265 comments via fax, phone, and regular mail. Approximately 38% of the substantive comments we have received touch on government structure reform. 40% of these comments (16% of the total substantive comments) request that the commission investigate term limits.

Comments additionally express a desire for the ability to recall elected officials, to participate in direct democracy through referendums, and to reform government through redistricting.

Nonetheless, commenters primarily address term limits:

“Absolute term limits of any statewide office **of 2 terms**. Require a 2-to-4 year dissociation from politics for 2 years before reentering the political picture.” —Geneva, 02/21/2009

“If term limits are not imposed on legislators, in general, they should be imposed on legislative leaders, in particular. Some legislative leaders serve for many years and impose a dictatorial rule on their members.” —Chicago, 02/28/2009

“If every elected official had one six-year term, they could devote their efforts to the job at hand and not be sidetracked by re-election issues.” —Bourbonnais, 03/03/2009

“By implementing term limits for all levels of elected office (possibly with the exception of judges), our politicians will be free to act independently. If they're not concerned with raising money for their next 12 campaigns, then they will be free to vote for those pieces of legislation that they believe are best, not those pieces that their supporters think are best.” —Chicago, 03/06/2009

Some commenters focused on the need for *universal* term limits:

“Term limits for everyone, from the Governor and legislature, down to City/Village council.” —Northbrook, 01/18/2009

One commenter suggested that longer terms might reduce reliance on campaign contributions:

“Today, there is no benefit to such a short [two-year] term at either the federal or state levels. Let officials get elected, get established and concentrate on governing as opposed to running for re-election. **A four-year term is recommended.**” —Skokie, 01/06/2009

Other commenters focused on the right to recall:

“Making politics a career invites disaster. **We also need the right to recall elected officials.**” —Bolingbrook, 02/02/2009

“I strongly urge that we pass a recall amendment so that **elected officials not doing their jobs can be removed from office by the voters.**” —Kingston, 01/12/2009

A number of commenters suggested increased use of direct democracy:

“**I believe veto referendum should be instituted for the benefit of the citizens.** A referendum to veto laws by petition and ballot will stop the legislature from “stuffing” shell bills with amendments at the end of a session and passing a law without any public oversight.” —East Peoria, 02/20/2009

Several commenters focused on the need for elections to fill vacant positions:

“It is evident that the appointing officials can no longer be a part of the mix. **Special elections need to be conducted** so that the People of the State of Illinois vote for the person who will finish the term.” —Hoffman Estates, 02/16/2009

A number of commenters suggested investigating redistricting and gerrymandering:

“The egregious redistricting process needs to be overhauled immediately. **Voters should be choosing their representatives, and not vice versa.**” —Chicago, 01/12/2009

“Eliminate the gerrymandering that determines districts. **See the Iowa method for enacting fair, balanced districts.** The blatant gerrymandering invites corruption and cronyism.” —Round Lake, 01/11/2009

Some commenters suggested particular structural changes for Illinois government:

“I propose an executive council similar to those found in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. An executive council comprises five to nine members who act as a check on the many of the very activities that the last two governors have caused trouble with.” —Lombard, 01/05/2009

“I would like to see Illinois return to the **three representatives per district system**. That gave minority groups more voice in government.” —Chicago, 02/19/2009

“Restore the LT. Governor as the senate President.” —Chicago, 01/10/2009

Finally, a large number of commenters suggested that the size and complexity of the state government should be streamlined:

“I have been surprised at the ineffectiveness and complexity of the government structure in the State, County and Local level. **Countless taxing entities which afford corrupt politicians a number of opportunities to operate.**” —Evanston, 01/11/2009

“One item to address is the number of Boards, Commissions, Panels, Study groups that the state has created. I doubt that anyone knows the number of these groups that are in existence, much less what they are costing the state.” —Crest Hill, 01/18/2009

“I think ALL state agencies should be downsized, starting at the top.” —Pittsfield, 01/12/2009