



ILLINOIS REFORM COMMISSION

Thursday, January 22, 2009

Public Comments from Website and Other Sources

As of Wednesday, January 21, the Illinois Reform Commission had received 367 comments, the bulk of them through www.reformillinoisnow.org. We have also started to receive comments via fax, email, and regular mail. These comments have ranged from offers of volunteer service, to suggestions for reform, to personal testimony about how corruption has affected lives of Illinoisans.

Although we have received a wide range of suggestions and comments, a substantial number of the commenters addressed the need for campaign reform. Some suggested particular remedies:

“There is an absolute need to **create a system that voters can have confidence in**. Decisions are made based on what is best for the voters and taxpayers not the special interest groups. A system must be put in place **that eliminates special interest influence through campaign donations to all candidates**. Full transparency is required.” — Mount Prospect, 1/06

“**Adopt a campaign contributions statute** similar in breadth and scope to that of Connecticut, **which includes complete bans on contributions from lobbyists, state contractors, and prospective state contractors** to both elected and other legislative officials.” —Chicago, 1/14

“Without considerable money behind a candidate, he/she struggles to have any success in any election. **The two-party system is basically a joke**. It in itself creates and maintains corruption because elected officials have to walk the party line, keep their collective mouths shut, and put the interests of the party ahead of the people they represent.” —Bismarck, 1/17

Many commenters also expressed a strong desire for term limits:

“I sincerely hope that the Commission will seriously consider **a strong recommendation for both legislative and executive term limits**. I am convinced that among the root causes of corruption and mismanagement is the effort that goes into the attainment and retention of public office” —Lake Forest, 1/20

Several commenters expressed frustration and criticism of the state's treatment of whistleblowers:

“A whistle blower needs to know for sure his/her job is protected, not just a promise; a contract that if the ethics complaint is proven, the state will always be obligated to keep the employee safe from job loss. **The current system is worthless and everyone knows they will likely eventually lose their job, by turning in their complaint.**” —Moweaqua, 1/17

The need for transparency was specifically noted by many:

“I think the key need is to **develop transparency in the contract procurement process** by federal, state, county and city agencies. It's clear that there are political contributions. The key is to connect political contributions to the award of contracts to contributors using improper procurement practices.” —Lake Forest, 1/16

And often, commenters supplied a laundry list of problems and suggested solutions:

“Several solutions come to mind, term limits, 401K in place of pensions, no private funds may be used for elections (either from the general population, PACs or lobbyists). If lobbyists cannot convince a legislator without the use of money to adopt their position then they probably aren't very good at their jobs.” —Woodstock, 1/09

Finally, a number of commenters suggested steps for the commission:

“Instead of completely ‘reinventing the wheel’ what if the commission would **seek out those states who have enacted laws and legislation** that provide a high level of competent and ethical governance? Hopefully there is at least one state that can provide this model.” —Le Roy, 1/17

“I hope the commission **sticks with nuts-and-bolts geek issues on openness and procurement reform**, and leaves the political transformation to politicians. They'll lose any creditability if they start getting on soapboxes lecturing voters about attitudes.” —Champaign, 1/19