

## Two Bits from the "Only in Illinois" File

Written by Rich Miller

Sunday, 23 September 2012 05:05

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I have two poll results to tell you about today. One is about an alleged criminal; the other is about a proven liar. Expelled state Representative Derrick Smith (D-Chicago) is leading his only opponent by 38 points and is close to the 50 percent he'll need to reclaim his seat. According to a poll of 556 likely voters conducted September 12 by We Ask America, Smith is crushing third-party candidate Lance Tyson 48-9. The poll has a margin of error of 4.15 percent. Smith was expelled from the House in August, months after his federal indictment for allegedly accepting a \$7,000 cash bribe. He's still on the ballot, though, and faces Lance Tyson, who was picked to run by the district's Democratic ward committeemen. Tyson loaned his campaign more than \$26,000 last week after I told my subscribers about this poll. That's most of what he's raised so far. Former Representative Smith reported having almost \$58,000 in the bank at the end of June. He has raised no money since then, but he still has enough to do some mailers and flyers, if he hasn't already spent his cash on legal expenses. If Smith regains his seat in November, the Illinois Constitution forbids the House from expelling him for the same reason next year. The House would either have to come up with a new reason unrelated to his indictment, or suffer the indignity of allowing him to keep his seat while he's tried for bribery. The Chicago Sun-Times' Carol Marin reported recently that House Speaker Michael Madigan and Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle were both neutral in the Smith race. Madigan's spokesperson told me that his boss was neutral because

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two Democrats were running against each other.

Illinois is grand, isn't it? Sheesh.

Because Madigan refuses to help, Tyson will likely need a big assist from Secretary of State Jesse White, who was responsible for putting Smith in the House in the first place.

Meanwhile, state Representative Jerry Costello II (D-Smithton) leads his Republican opponent by eight points.

But the poll was taken before Julie Bigham Eggers (R-Columbia) was caught in a major gaffe and some big lies that could cost her dearly. The We Ask America poll taken September 11 has Costello leading Eggers 48-40. The poll of 756 likely voters had a margin of error of 3.55 percent.

Eggers told the *Belleville News-Democrat* that the “number-one reason” she ran for the House “was for the health care, because it has pretty good health care.” she said. “Actually, I’m in it for the insurance, health insurance,” she told the paper’s editorial board.

Eggers later announced that she wouldn’t sign up for the legislative health-insurance plan or the pension plan and wouldn’t even accept her salary, and challenged Costello to do the same. But the damage was already done.

And it’s tough to believe that she’ll follow through on those promises because she’s been caught in some bizarre lies.

Eggers has repeatedly claimed in her campaign that she’s a “lifelong southern Illinoisan.” But the *Belleville News-Democrat* found out that she lived in Missouri for 10 years. When pressed, Eggers told the paper she lived out of state for “I don’t know, a couple years.”

The House Democrats then unearthed video of Eggers speaking at an event claiming she “did” her law degree at the same time as her MBA degree.

“That’s extremely hard,” Eggers said about getting a law degree and an MBA at the same time. “And any of these judges running up around here will tell you, that’s pretty much something you don’t want to do.”

The trouble is that Eggers actually dropped out of law school after a year.

Hey, there’s no huge shame in dropping out of law school. Just don’t claim that you “did” the degree.

Costello, the son of retiring Democratic U.S. Representative Jerry Costello, is now using the video in a new TV ad.

“I will always tell you the truth,” Eggers says in the full video of her comments.

Except when she’s not.

Three days after I told my subscribers about this strange candidate, Eggers reported that Anne Diaz Griffin had contributed \$5,000 to her campaign fund. Griffin’s husband kicked in another \$5,000.

Griffin is a wealthy Chicagoan who is bankrolling a new online startup called “Reboot Illinois,” which, among other things, is pushing for stronger ethics reforms in state government.

Only in Illinois would a “reformer” bankroll somebody like this.

*Rich Miller* also publishes *Capitol Fax* (a daily political newsletter) and [CapitolFax.com](http://www.CapitolFax.com).