

Governor Quinn Proposes Lincoln Amendment to Strengthen Ethics Standards

Written by n

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Measure Empowers Citizens to Enact Ethics Laws for Public Officials Through Popular Initiative and Referendum

CHICAGO – February 12, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn today proposed an amendment to the Illinois Constitution that would allow state voters to enact ethics reforms through popular initiative and referendum. As Illinois today observes the 203rd anniversary of the birth of President Abraham Lincoln, Governor Quinn called for the passage of the Lincoln Amendment to give voters the power to directly implement stronger ethics laws for the first time in state history. This proposed amendment follows Governor Quinn's successful 2010 push for an amendment to the Illinois Constitution allowing for the recall of corrupt governors.

"There is no greater force than every day people banding together for a cause they believe in," Governor Quinn said. "Our citizens must always have a role in keeping our government honest and ethical."

Sponsored by Sen. Annazette Collins (D-Chicago), the amendment gives citizens the power to enact fundamental ethics reforms to local governments, school districts, and the legislative, executive and judicial branches of state government by gathering 8 percent of the total votes cast in the most recent gubernatorial election. The Lincoln Amendment would be limited to changes that establish and enforce ethical standards, including campaign finance reform, conflict-of-interest voting, pay-to-pay abuses, patronage abuse and misuse of taxpayer funds.

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Currently, voters may only propose, by popular initiative, amendments to the Illinois constitution that deal with the structure and procedure of the General Assembly. If the Lincoln Amendment is approved this spring by the General Assembly, voters would have the opportunity to enact through referendum a permanent change in the Illinois Constitution during the November 2012 general election. Once approved by three-fifths of those voting on the question or a majority of those voting in the election, the Lincoln Amendment would become law, giving voters more power than ever before to improve honesty and integrity in government.

“As elected officials, we are accountable to the people we represent, and it is vital that their voices be heard,” said Sen. Collins. “I am proud to sponsor this amendment, which will allow people to be even more involved in their government, and I would like to thank Governor Quinn for his support of ethics in government.”

Since taking office, Governor Quinn has signed landmark campaign finance reform that instituted Illinois’ first-ever limits on campaign contributions from candidates, political parties and political action committees. Governor Quinn also launched [Appointments.Illinois.Gov](#) , [Accountability.Illinois.Gov](#) and [Data.Illinois.Gov](#) to bring more transparency to state appointments, contracts and salary information and public data collected by state and federal agencies.

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