



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

NEWS

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Governor Quinn Signs Major Legislation to Increase Transparency in State Government

Launches website to make state spending information accessible

CHICAGO – August 17, 2009. Governor Pat Quinn joined with Attorney General Lisa Madigan and members of the Illinois Reform Commission to sign bills to increase transparency and accountability in state government. The legislation strengthens the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and ensures the state's boards and commissions are open and accessible to the public.

"The people of Illinois deserve an open, ethical and transparent government," said Governor Quinn. "This legislation provides greater oversight to ensure our government complies whenever possible with the Freedom of Information Act, protects the integrity of our boards and commissions and makes state government more accountable to the people we serve."

The FOIA legislation (Senate Bill 189), sponsored by Sen. Kwame Raoul (D-Chicago) and House Speaker Michael Madigan (D-Chicago), rewrites the Illinois Freedom of Information Act to give the Attorney General's Office authority to decide disputes between those requesting information and governmental bodies.

"Today, Illinois comes out of the Stone Age and into the modern era of transparency and openness," said Attorney General Madigan. "By creating a public access counselor with binding opinion authority to fight for an open and accountable government, Illinois is now at the nation's forefront. With this new law, the people of Illinois will now have a greater ability to know what their government is doing."

In addition to creating a permanent public access counselor within the Attorney General's Office to oversee enforcement of the act, it strengthens fines for noncompliance. The legislation also allows fewer exemptions to the act and shortens the time for a government to respond to a request.

Governor Quinn also signed Senate Bill 1602, sponsored by Sen. Susan Garrett (D-Lake Forest) and Rep. Jack Franks (D-Woodstock). This bill establishes strict ethics requirements and restrictions for current and prospective members of state boards and commissions appointed by the Governor and calls for the creation of a website that provides information about board and commission membership.

At a meeting of the Illinois Reform Commission in April, Governor Quinn launched Appointments.Illinois.gov. The site allows Illinois citizens to access information about membership and vacancies in the state's 300 boards and commissions and fill out online applications for those appointments that are made by the Governor. Thousands of applications have been filed since the site's launch.

The legislation also requires each board and commission with a website and full-time information technology staff to make information regarding its meetings available online.

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Today the Governor also launched the Illinois Transparency and Accountability Portal to provide Illinoisans with access to state government spending information. The website makes the State's expenditures and employee pay data available through a single, searchable portal: Accountability.Illinois.gov.

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