



# **Bourne seeks change in ethics tests for lawmakers**

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*"Failure should not be an option."*

LITCHFIELD - Currently, Illinois lawmakers are required to test their knowledge of ethics laws annually by taking an ethics exam - the kicker though, they're allowed to fail every question. State Representative Avery Bourne (R-Raymond) is the Sponsor of House Bill 526, a bill that is seeking to change this practice by requiring that lawmakers must pass the test on their first attempt.

“Lawmakers, as elected officials, should be held to a higher standard of accountability. We are charged with crafting the laws of Illinois. Understanding our ethics laws is the first step,” said Bourne. “Not knowing the laws of ethics in this state and being unable to answer questions about them is simply unacceptable.”

The ethics test is mandatory as part of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act. The act, passed in 2003, was put in place to combat corruption in state government. To take the test an individual reads an overview of state laws relating to that section of the exam, answers from list of options or true/false, and then is redirected back to re-answer if they picked the wrong answer. They eventually answer every question correctly, ensuring that they pass.

The test asks questions about ethics as they apply to daily tasks, guiding the employee through scenarios that test their knowledge of ethical conduct. Questions on the test include scenarios that deal with what constitutes political work on state time, accepting gifts in violation of the Gift Ban Act, proper recording of time worked, and whistleblower protection. This bill would provide further accountability by requiring that lawmakers take their ethics exam seriously.