

# State Representatives Say Illinois Needs Real Reform, Not Symbolic Gestures

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A word cloud on a black background. The words are arranged in a roughly circular shape. The most prominent words are 'VIRTUE' and 'ETHICS' in large, bold, white capital letters. Other words include 'CHARACTER', 'CONFUCIUS', 'INTENT', 'ARISTOTLE', 'MORALS', 'MOTIVATION', 'GOODNESS', and 'BUDDHA'. The words are in various sizes and orientations, creating a dynamic visual effect.

SPRINGFIELD – Governor JB Pritzker’s amendatory veto of ethics legislation approved last spring has stalled in the Illinois House, giving lawmakers an opportunity to craft a better bill, according to State Representatives Brad Halbrook (R-Shelbyville); Dan Caulkins (R-Decatur); Blaine Wilhour (R-Beecher City); Adam Niemerg (R-Dieterich) and Chris Miller (R-Oakland) who are issuing the following statement.

“We voted against Senate Bill 539 because we recognized the inherent flaws in the legislation. Since this bill was passed organizations such as the Better Government Association and other civic-minded groups have all confirmed our view that this legislation gives the appearance of reform but does very little to substantively change the culture of corruption in Springfield.

The opportunity now exists to enact meaningful reforms and we urge our colleagues to enact a better, more comprehensive ethics bill. At a minimum this new legislation must:

- Require legislators to recuse themselves when there are conflicts of interest
- Allow the Legislative Inspector General to start investigations without the Ethics Commission’s approval
- Give the LIG subpoena power

Requiring ethical behavior for politicians is not something to be compromised. We either have ethical standards or we don’t. The legislative leaders in Springfield are well aware of Legislative Inspector General Carol Pope’s resignation due to the Legislature’s lack of commitment to real reform. They are well aware of the flaws in this legislation. Instead of whipping up the votes to sustain the Governor’s technical changes to Senate Bill 539, they should allow this bill to die and begin working on new ethics reform legislation.

The people of Illinois deserve better than the water-downed, lackluster reform bill our legislative leaders are desperately trying to resuscitate. The people are demanding real reform. The history of corruption in this state is a well-documented embarrassment. This General Assembly needs to get serious about instituting the strongest anti-corruption safeguards in the country to ensure that corrupt politicians never gain this kind of power again.”