



BPI PROGRAM OVERVIEW

POLITICAL REFORM

In 2008, BPI's Board of Directors determined that we should turn our attention to a new area of activity in our quest to serve the public interest: Political Reform in Illinois. Our goal is to address the culture of corruption that has become pervasive at all levels of Illinois government, and help restore open honest, responsible and accountable government in our state. Not a small challenge, by any measure. But an important one.

Currently, BPI's political reform agenda consists of three principal initiatives:

1) PARTICIPATING IN CHANGE ILLINOIS!

BPI is a charter member of CHANGE Illinois! (Coalition for Honest and New Government Ethics in Illinois). CHANGE ILLINOIS! is a coalition of civic, business, professional, non-profit and philanthropic organizations advocating for comprehensive political reform. Formed in early 2009, CHANGE Illinois! has played a leadership role in developing and passing the state's first campaign contribution limits legislation. Effective in 2011, the new law limits the amount of political contributions that can be made by individuals, corporations, unions and political committees in local and state elections; requires timely and more frequent disclosure; and provides stricter enforcement mechanisms.

The CHANGE Illinois! coalition is actively advocating for additional reforms that will improve the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of government and elections in Illinois.

BPI Vice President Deborah Harrington is a co-chair of the CHANGE Illinois! coalition, and directors Frank Beal, Hoy McConnell and Dawn Clark Netsch are members of the Steering Committee.

2) STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF INSPECTORS GENERAL IN ILLINOIS

The office of inspector general is responsible for rooting out corruption, fraud and waste in government. An office of inspector general can be established at any level of government — local, county, state or federal.

The effectiveness of an inspector general depends on a number of factors: the nature of the appointment process, the extent of the IG's authority and powers, the independence of the office from the political process, the ability to make findings public, the organizational reporting lines, provisions for accountability, etc.

BPI is in the process of analyzing the structure and effectiveness of inspectors general offices in the City of Chicago, Cook County, and the State of Illinois, as well as examining best practices in other states and jurisdictions.

In 2010, we will publish a comprehensive report on these Illinois IG offices, including a series of recommendations designed to strengthen and increase their effectiveness.

These recommendations will form the basis of specific policy and legislative initiatives that BPI and other reform organizations will pursue.

3) REPRESENTING CHICAGO'S INSPECTOR GENERAL

BPI is acting as *pro bono* counsel for the Inspector General of the City of Chicago in its effort to require the City's corporation counsel to comply with a subpoena that requests confidential information needed for the Inspector General to investigate a no-bid contract with a former top aide to Mayor Daley.

This case has potentially far-reaching legal implications. It pits two important legal principles in opposition: the public's right to know (the City Inspector General) versus the sanctity of attorney-client privilege (City Corporation Counsel).

The case is currently on appeal in the Circuit Court of Cook County.

POLITICAL REFORM PROGRAM STAFF

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