



OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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Sent Via Email to:

Sen. Jil Tracy, Chairperson
Rep. Avery Bourne
Rep. Kelly Burke
Sen. Cristina Castro
Rep. Michael Marron
Mr. Pat McGuire
Sen. Brian Stewart
Rep. Maurice West
Members, Legislative Ethics Commission
420 Stratton Building
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear LEC Members:

When I took this job as the Legislative Inspector General, I thought I might be able to make a difference working from the inside. I thought I could be useful in improving the public's view of the legislature and help bring about true ethics reform. Unfortunately, I have not been able to do so. This last legislative session demonstrated true ethics reform is not a priority. The LIG has no real power to effect change or shine a light on ethics violations, the position is essentially a paper tiger.

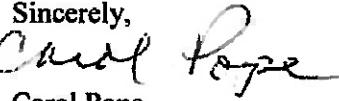
I testified in front of the Joint Commission on Ethics reform on February 6, 2020. All of the items I talked about are still unimproved today, except for being able to initiate an investigation without prior approval by the LEC. I testified again this spring in front of the House and Senate Ethics committees about important issues that directly affect my office and the LEC. Those

issues include having the ability to issue subpoenas without having to seek prior approval from the LEC, mandated publication of founded summary reports concerning legislators, the ability to publish reports that vindicate legislators, the incongruent jurisdiction between the LIG and the LEC and providing for the appointment of a nonpartisan citizen to serve as the ninth member of the LEC to avoid strictly partisan 4-4 votes. None of these reforms were adopted.

The General Assembly actually restricted the LIG's jurisdiction during this last session by requiring the filing of a complaint before the LIG can undertake an investigation. If public allegations about a legislator are made, but no complaint is filed with the LIG's office, the LIG cannot open an investigation. This actually is a throwback to legislation that existed prior to 2009. In 2009, the GA enacted legislation that removed the requirement of acting only on a complaint. See SB 54 of the 96th General Assembly. For the last 12 years, the LIG has been able to open an investigation based on public allegations in the media. But no longer.

In addition, the GA restricted the LIG's jurisdiction to matters arising out of government service or employment. As I have explained repeatedly, including before the Joint Commission on Ethics Reform back in 2020, as a result of this, the LIG will not be able to investigate conduct unbecoming a legislator that results from things such as posting revenge porn on social media, failure to pay income taxes on non-legislative income, and other conduct that I and the public think the LIG should be able to investigate.

While it is certainly within the prerogative of the Legislature to craft these statutes as it sees fit, I am unable to remain in a position where I cannot be as effective as I hoped to be. I appreciate the opportunity to have served the People of Illinois in this position and have enjoyed working with the LEC. I am willing to continue my service while you search for my replacement, or until December 15, 2021, whichever comes first. If you prefer I vacate the office while you search for my replacement, that is fine too. I am willing to assist my successor with the transition.

Sincerely,

Carol Pope
Legislative Inspector General

CP/cdc