



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL ANNOUNCES ETHICS REFORM TASK FORCE

Four members appointed, each with a history of ethics reform; task force charged with reviewing ethics ordinance and recommending ways to strengthen it

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced the appointment of an ethics reform task force, which will feature four leading reformers and will have a four-month deadline to recommend reforms to the ethics ordinance that governs conflicts of interest among City officials and employees.

"Those in public life must be accountable for upholding the public trust and serving the public interest," said Mayor Emanuel. "The ethics ordinance governs the conduct of City officials and employees, but often is vague and lacks the mechanisms to deter abuse. The Task Force will work to recommend reforms that ensure government is honest and accountable to the taxpayers."

The Task Force will be chaired by Cynthia Canary and include Sergio Acosta, Alderman Will Burns, and Dawn Clark Netsch. They will be staffed by a pro bono team of senior attorneys from the law firm Jones Day through the Civic Consulting Alliance.

The Ethics Reform Task Force is charged with assessing the current ordinance, considering best practices on a national level, engaging local experts and the public and making recommendations on strengthening Chicago's ordinance so there is appropriate oversight of government activity.

In his first six months in office, Mayor Emanuel has undertaken a number of key steps to increase transparency and ethics in City government, including closing the revolving door between government service and lobbying, creating an online database of lobbying activity, reining in no-bid contracts and increasing transparency in procurement and placing an unprecedented amount of data online in an easy-to-access format.

The members of the Ethics Reform Task Force are:



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Cynthia Canary *Chair*

Cynthia Canary served as the director of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform (ICPR) after helping to found the group in 1997. ICPR conducts research and advocates reforms to promote civic participation, address the role of money in politics, and encourage accountability in government. Canary stepped down from ICPR in June of 2011. Previously, Canary served as executive director of the League of Women Voters of Illinois, where she helped lead the successful effort to implement the National Voter Registration Act in Illinois. She has also worked in the Public Education Division of the American Bar Association and has had experience in both state and local government.

Sergio Acosta

A former long-time supervisor in the U.S. Attorney's Office, Sergio Acosta is a Partner at Hinshaw & Culbertson and has focused on criminal civil rights, fraud, violent crimes, labor racketeering and domestic terrorism investigations and prosecutions. He has worked in concert with many state and federal agencies, including the Department of Justice, Internal Revenue Service, Illinois Department of Revenue, Illinois State Police and all of the federal law enforcement agencies. Acosta is a founding member and past president of the National Hispanic Prosecutors Association.

Alderman Will Burns

William D. "Will" Burns is currently serving in his first term as Alderman of Chicago's 4th ward, after serving two terms as the Illinois State Representative for the 26th district. Prior to his election to the House in 2008, Burns served as Deputy Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor to the Illinois Senate President. Burns has also previously served as the Vice President of Program and Field Offices for the Chicago Urban League and the Education and Tax Policy Manager for the Metropolitan Planning Council.

Dawn Clark Netsch

Dawn Clark Netsch is a law professor at Northwestern University. She served in the Illinois State Senate, as Illinois Comptroller and in 1994 was the first woman to be nominated by a major political party to run for Governor of Illinois. Dawn is an Illinois Campaign for Political Reform (ICPR) Board Member and a previous recipient of ICPR's Paul Simon Public Service Award. Netsch also works with the CHANGE Illinois Coalition to bring campaign finance reform to the state of Illinois. Previously, Netsch also served on Governor Quinn's Campaign Finance Reform Task Force.

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