



LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET

Bill Numbers: HB3582 (Republican sponsors) and HB2892 (Democratic sponsors)

Short Description: Ethics - Independent Legislative Inspector General

BACKGROUND: WHY IT MATTERS

Public corruption can be addressed with good laws, strong enforcement, and public engagement. In Illinois, the Legislative Ethics Commission (LEC) and the Legislative Inspector General (LIG) oversee legislator conduct and focus on enforcement. However, the LEC governs the investigations of the LIG. Former LIGs have resigned, calling the office “a paper tiger” because of limitations in the statute that created the office; the office lacks the independent subpoena and publishing power shared by its state peers. This lack gives the Legislative Ethics Commission the power to suppress an investigation at the front end or deny reporting of the findings at the back end.

IL HB3582 and HB2892 are Republican and Democratic bills, respectively, that ask for essentially the same thing – a truly independent LIG. Both bills allow the LIG to 1) issue subpoenas, and 2) publish its findings, without requiring advance approval from the LEC.

The Democratic bill goes a step further and requires 3) the LEC to appoint at least one commissioner from the general public. Placing members of the public on the LEC is a critical, public check and balance, making the process more transparent and accountable. The League is advocating for passage of a bipartisan, consolidated bill – with all three reforms. The League believes passing Legislative Inspector General reform in both chambers is essential to restoring public faith in Illinois state government.

ACTION NEEDED

- Contact your House representative’s district office to ask them to sign on as a co-sponsor of a bipartisan, consolidated bill that both parties can support in the 2024 Spring Session.
- Contact your state Senator’s district office to ask for the creation of a bi-partisan Independent LIG companion bill that both parties can support in the 2024 Spring Session.
- Contact both the House and Senate Ethics Committee Chairs and members.
- Call Governor Pritzker (217) 782-6830 to ask him to support independence in the LIG office.
- Write Letters to the Editor highlighting all three reforms to the LIG office.
- Share a League-created LIG reform post on social media.

LEAGUE POSITION

The League of Women Voters mission is to defend democracy and empower voters. To do that, we promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.