



Bill
Brady

Daily Chronicle questionnaire: Bill Brady

Election primary: Illinois governor (Republican)

Hometown: Bloomington

Bio: Real estate development, construction and marketing professional; State senator, 2002 to present; State representative, 1993-2000; bachelor of science degree in economics, finance and political science from Illinois Wesleyan University

Gov. Rod Blagojevich vowed to clean up corruption in a state famous for it, but instead became the fifth governor to be indicted in recent history, and the first ever to be impeached. What do you plan to do to clean up Illinois government?

Illinois needs a clean break from the Chicago-style politics of the past. As the only downstate candidate not tied to politicians of the past, I offer that change. I will run a transparent and trustworthy government, ending the culture of greed and corruption that has stained Illinois' integrity and image. My clean break reforms will give government back to the people through term limits, campaign contribution caps and a redistricting plan that takes drawing district maps out of the hands of partisan legislators. Our citizens are demanding more of their public officials, and we certainly owe them every effort we can make to regain their trust and restore integrity in Illinois government. The days of full-time legislators, full-time fundraising and career politicians should be days of the past. We need to ensure that it's the public's interests that are being served in Springfield, not the politicians' interests.

Is an increase in the state income tax necessary to help balance the budget? Any other tax increases? Why or why not?

Illinois taxes and fees already are over burdensome and hinder business investment in Illinois. I will work to reduce the cost on Illinois families, business and business investment. This means, holding the current rate or reducing it. I will not support, nor will I sign, any increase or expansion of the state income tax or state sales tax. To do so would invite more inefficiencies and overspending and, just as importantly, drive our tax-paying businesses and their jobs to other states, as the tax and fee increases imposed by the previous administration have done. I will work with the General Assembly to repeal those taxes and fees to once again make Illinois friendly to economic expansion. If we are to attract business investment and jobs in Illinois, we need to reduce the cost of doing business and the cost of living in our state.

What specific spending cuts do you propose to help balance the state's budget?

Illinois needs a better managed Medicaid system that gives recipients access earlier in their illness, so patients can see their doctors instead of high-cost emergency room visits saving the state approximately \$1.2 billion to \$1.8 billion. I will eliminate the State Board of Education as a means to cut bureaucratic spending and provide more money directly to the classrooms. I will restructure our educational bureaucracy by creating a streamlined, efficient and smaller department directly accountable to the governor. I will create better coordination between our 49 community college districts and regional offices of education to more effectively assist our local school districts. I will eliminate the high-paid Department of Corrections appointees under the Blagojevich/Quinn administration, focusing more dollars on front-line correctional workers. Furthermore, we need to improve the management of our corrections system by eliminating the expensive, mandatory overtime system of the current administration.

Any attempt to balance the state budget will be difficult without addressing reform of the state pension system. How do you plan to do so?

In order to stop fiscal irresponsibility in what is a very serious pension funding problem, I believe we must move from the current defined benefit pension program for state employees to a defined contribution system for new state employees, similar to what we offer state university employees under legislation I sponsored and similar to 401(k) options being considered and implemented by other states and private industry. I believe such a system will begin to correct the growing unfunded liability problem. It is actuarially sound and provides guarantees and benefits for the state taxpayers, state employees and their families. The existing pension liability should be refinanced through commercial paper, bonds and banks, amortized over 50 years with the

payments increasing an average of 4 percent or at a rate equal to the percentage of the increase of state government revenues.

The state Legislature recently passed a campaign finance reform bill that for the first time in Illinois caps the amount of money that individuals and businesses can donate to candidates for state office, with some exceptions. What do you think of the legislation?

It was an embarrassment. It was called reform but it included exemptions designed to protect the power of the current Democratic Speaker of the House and the Democratic President of the Senate. I support imposing the federal restrictions on individual campaign contributions on Illinois legislative and statewide candidates, \$2,400 for a primary and \$2,400 for the general election cycle. Those limits would be real and meaningful reform, meaning that no individual could contribute more than \$4,800 to the election or re-election of any statewide official. Corporate and union contributions should be prohibited, and political action committees could contribute no more than \$5,000 per election cycle.

What will you do to promote job creation in Illinois?

I will promote an environment to help retain and create jobs in Illinois by cutting the cost of doing business and providing new job creation incentives. I am proposing a \$2,100 tax credit to businesses for every new job they create. The average job brings in \$4,200 in revenue to the state. I believe it's a good investment for the state, attracting new jobs to get Illinois' unemployed back to work. I will bring back the 700,000 jobs Illinois has lost in recent years, ultimately resulting in a \$3 billion annual infusion of tax revenues to the state treasury. I will balance the state's budget to give the corporate sector predictability and greater confidence in the state's fiscal health. I also will provide the leadership to make Illinois a competitive place to live and work again and to get Illinois back to living within its means.

Why are you the best candidate to lead this state for the next four years?

As a businessman, I know how to retool a business to keep it competitive and will bring that experience to state government. I'll create a business climate that encourages companies to invest in creating new opportunity in Illinois and maintain existing employment for Illinois workers. I support reducing the overall cost of doing business in Illinois, including eliminating excessive taxes and fees on business, restructuring our expensive workers compensation system, and reforming the state's medical malpractice and legal liability laws. I'll eliminate the double tax on motor fuel and rededicate the state's motor fuel tax to improvement of Illinois' infrastructure. The long-term solution to the state's fiscal imbalance is bringing back the 700,000 jobs Illinois has lost in recent years. In the short term, I'll order a top-to-bottom prioritization of state spending to curtail programs that are outdated or underperforming and reconstruct government from the bottom up.

Distinguish yourself from the other candidates in this race.

I am the only candidate with business and legislative experience. With Illinois being the country's fifth largest economy and arguably having the greatest natural and human resources, our state should be able to provide system services to Illinois citizens at a lower cost than other states in the nation. I will bring fiscal discipline back to Illinois, so that Illinois once again lives within its means. There is not an area of state government that can't afford to do more with less. I will make the difficult decisions necessary to balance Illinois' budget without raising taxes. Of all the candidates for governor, Republican or Democrat, I am the only one who has voted solidly and consistently against raising taxes, and I will continue to do so. Illinois needs a clean break from the Chicago-style politics and politicians of the past. As the only downstate candidate, I offer that change.

Why should voters trust you to fix this state's many problems?

There's not one area of state government budgeting that cannot be deconstructed and reconstructed to save money. I believe Illinois needs to prioritize its programs and cut state spending by approximately 10 percent. I've called for tax cuts of \$1 billion, including rolling back the \$300 million in business tax and fee increases imposed by the Blagojevich/Quinn administration, eliminating the sales tax on gasoline and tending the estate tax penalty in Illinois. My voting record proves I stand against tax increases and for Illinois small businesses and working families. As a businessman, I know what it means to sign both sides of a check. I know what it takes to meet a payroll in these trying economic times and how to make the difficult decisions that enable a company to survive. That's the kind of experience I will bring as Governor, and leadership that Illinois needs.