



Pat
Quinn

Daily Chronicle questionnaire: Patrick J. Quinn

Election primary: Illinois governor (Democrat)

Hometown: Chicago

Bio: Illinois governor since January 2009; lieutenant governor from 2003 to 2009; former state treasurer; In 1983, launched the drive to create the Citizens Utility Board; in 1982, elected to head the Cook County Board of (Property) Tax Appeals; BSFS in International Economics, Georgetown University Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, 1971; J.D., Northwestern University, 1980.

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?

In my 10 months as governor, I have worked hard to restore people's faith in their state government. There are further reforms to be made, and I am committed to making real reform a top priority through the rest of my administration. But look where we are today, compared with one year ago: We have overhauled boards and commissions, bringing reform and transparency to organizations that were once ruled by political patronage. We have passed and signed a tough new law reforming state procurement procedures, making it a crime to trade political favors for procurement contracts. We have empowered the secretary of state's inspector general to investigate lobbyists who break the rules. We have created the Illinois Transparency and Accountability Portal, so taxpayers can go on-line and find out exactly where their money is going. I have shown that, with integrity and honest hard work, we can repair our reputation.

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

My plan for addressing the budget crisis involves reducing costs, raising revenue, and reforming our tax system, all while maintaining necessary services for the people of Illinois. We must address the current fiscal crisis immediately, rather than pinning our hopes on some future alternative. That is why I have proposed modest increases in the individual and corporate income tax rates, along with closing corporate tax loopholes. I also believe we must recognize the need, during these difficult economic times, to offer tax relief to those families that need it the most. That is why I proposed tripling the personal exemption, so that families of four making under \$60,000 per year would see a reduction in their tax bills. My proposal actually represents the greatest tax relief that Illinois taxpayers have seen in a generation. The voters of Illinois deserve a governor who will respect their good sense and tell them the truth about our state's financial picture and the tough road ahead.

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

I have already identified \$2 billion in spending cuts for the current fiscal year, and I plan to continue to find new ways to save money going forward. It is important to remember that the vast majority of state programs, and those that are most expensive to provide and administer are required by statute. To make any meaningful cuts in the budget, it is necessary to work with the General Assembly to identify programs that can be reduced or eliminated. Given the state's current fiscal woes, I plan to work with the General Assembly to pass legislation that will enable the state to identify and implement more cuts, savings and efficiencies. But we cannot cut our way out of the current deficit. The best answer is to grow our way out of this financial crisis. My Jobs and Growth for Illinois economic plan, lays out a five-point approach to expanding our state economy and creating good new jobs.

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?

Illinois' public pension systems have become an enormous financial sinkhole. Without swift, effective reforms, these pension systems will wind up draining our state's resources and mortgaging our future for decades to come. In April, I signed a new law that allowed me to overhaul the boards that guide our public pension systems, and put well-regarded professionals in charge. The new law also requires those new members to follow strict ethics rules. Earlier this year, I proposed fundamental changes in the retirement plans for future state workers, setting their pension benefits at levels that taxpayers can afford. I also proposed

changing cost of living adjustments, so that retirees' benefits do not soar beyond taxpayers' ability to pay. As governor, I will make sure the state of Illinois keeps its promises to retired schoolteachers, state police officers, and others who have faithfully served the people of Illinois.

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?

I am a longtime proponent of campaign finance reform. My administration worked hard to pass the new campaign finance law, which represents real progress toward reform. I believe this bill will result in making elections in Illinois more competitive and making political fundraising more transparent. It dramatically improves financial disclosure, and it imposes Illinois' first-ever caps on political contributions. While the job of reforming Illinois government is far from over, this bill represents significant progress.

What will you do to promote job creation in Illinois?

Since I was sworn in as governor last January, creating and retaining jobs in Illinois has been my highest priority. We already have taken several steps to promote job creation in Illinois, including passing Illinois Jobs Now!, the state's first capital plan in 10 years, and implementing our five-point plan to bring jobs and growth to Illinois. As we work to expand our economy, we need to make the most of our single greatest resource – the people of Illinois, their skills, their talents, and their work ethic. Because I believe that jobs follow brainpower, I am committed to making strategic investments in the continuing education of our workforce, and making sure Illinois offers the ongoing job training we need to keep our workers competitive in this global economy.

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

I want to continue to serve as governor because I am the candidate most fit to guide Illinois through this difficult economic time and restore integrity to the Office of Governor. My top priority is bringing jobs to Illinois. People in our state are hurting right now. Families are sitting around kitchen tables trying to figure out how they will make ends meet. We need to create good jobs in every community throughout our state. Like President Franklin D. Roosevelt, I believe that there is no greater social service program than a job. That's why I have proposed Jobs and Growth for Illinois, which is designed to create new opportunities for communities throughout Illinois. I think that, by offering people who are now struggling the chance they deserve to find good jobs, we can reduce crime, expand our state economy, and put Illinois back on track.

Distinguish yourself from the other candidates in this race.

Both candidates in this race recognize the need for more revenues. My opponent offers a politically expedient plan to increase taxes only on the very rich – which an independent analysis showed won't raise the revenue the state needs to get the job done. My opponent's plan also requires a Constitutional amendment, which will take years to bring in the revenues the state needs to meet its responsibilities – if it ever even passes the Legislature. My opponent never mentions that a similar amendment was introduced in the last session and failed to win legislative support. I want to bring fairness to our tax system right now, by actually offering tax relief to working families who need it. I have never made any secret about our fiscal crisis and the need for new revenue. But we cannot have tunnel vision – we need to look at ways to make our economy grow to create additional revenues.

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

I have pursued a career in public service because I believe in honest and efficient government. Throughout my adult life, I have stood up for everyday people against the forces of special interests and political corruption. I want to continue to serve as governor because I have the moral fiber to guide Illinois through this difficult economic time and restore integrity to the Office of Governor. As Governor, I passed and signed Illinois' first comprehensive public works program in more than a decade, which will create and sustain hundreds of thousands of jobs. I am committed to bringing fairness to our income tax system, which currently imposes the same rate on millionaires and minimum-wage workers. I also believe we must reform funding for public education. The quality of children's education should not depend on their zip codes. I trust the voters of Illinois, I think they know I am sincerely committed to getting us out of these tough times.