

# CLEAR Initiative

*Criminal Law Edit, Alignment and Reform*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **COMMISSION TO RECOMMEND REFORM OF CONFUSING CRIMINAL CODE**

An independent commission of prominent and diverse experts in criminal justice has begun a two-year project to review and reform the Illinois Criminal Code.

Former Governor James R. Thompson and former Illinois Appellate Court Justice Gino L. DiVito will co-chair the Criminal Law Edit, Alignment and Reform (CLEAR) Commission. The 22-member commission, which met for the first time Monday, includes four legislators chosen by Democratic and Republican leaders in the General Assembly, Attorney General Lisa Madigan and a designee of Gov. Rod Blagojevich. Other members of the commission are prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges and law enforcement officers. (A complete list of commission members is attached.)

“For the past 40 years, the Illinois Criminal Code has been changed in piecemeal fashion, and today’s lengthy code is far more complex, confusing and sometimes inconsistent,” Thompson said. “Not only is it difficult for most citizens to follow, but even experienced lawyers and judges can find it hard to comprehend. We must make the code more readable, understandable, consistent and just.”

“The complexities of the Illinois Criminal Code increase the likelihood of lengthy appeals that are expensive to defendants and to government,” Justice DiVito said. “We must reform the code and reduce the likelihood that technical mistakes will allow criminals to escape punishment and reduce the chance that innocent people will be incarcerated.”

The CLEAR Commission will identify redundancies and inconsistencies in the code and will make recommendations for a simpler, balanced Code. The Commission expects to complete its work by December 2006. It will operate independent of state

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government and the court system and is funded through grants and in-kind donations. (A complete list of supporting foundations, firms, and organizations is attached.)

The Initiative has been developed by staff at Chicago Metropolis 2020. Chicago Metropolis 2020 is a non-profit organization created in February 1999 by The Commercial Club of Chicago to advance a *regional* policy agenda focused on the six-county Chicago metropolitan area. Based on a report issued by The Commercial Club in January, 1999 that emphasizes the importance of thinking about the future of the entire region, *Chicago Metropolis 2020: Preparing Metropolitan Chicago for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Chicago Metropolis 2020 was established and charged with implementing the recommendations of the report. Current policy areas include: Land Use and Development, Affordable Housing, Transportation, Early Childhood Education, Workforce Development, Health, and Justice/Violence.

Co-Directors of the commission staff will be Peter G. Baroni, former prosecutor and legal counsel to Senate Republicans, and Jean M. Templeton, from the criminal defense bar and the former research director for the Governor's Commission on Capital Punishment. John Decker, Professor of Criminal Law at DePaul University College of Law and author of "Illinois Criminal Law: A Survey of Crimes and Defenses" (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed 2000) will act as Special Advisor to the group.

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On the Web: <http://www.clearinitiative.org>

# **CLEAR INITIATIVE**

## **Criminal Law Edit, Alignment and Reform**

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### **COMMISSION MEMBERS**

#### **CLEAR Co-Chairs**

Justice Gino DiVito, Co-founder of Tabet DiVito & Rothstein LLC, former judge in the Circuit Court of Cook County and former justice on the Illinois Appellate Court

Governor James R. Thompson, Chair of Winston & Strawn, former governor of Illinois and former U.S. Attorney for Northern District of Illinois

#### **CLEAR Commissioners**

Joseph E. Birkett, DuPage County State's Attorney

Edwin A. Burnette, Cook County Public Defender

Justice Thomas E. Callum, Second District Appellate Court

Vincent Cornelius, Principle, Law Offices of Vincent Cornelius in DuPage

Senator John Cullerton, D-Chicago

Representative William Delgado, D-Chicago

Richard Devine, Cook County State's Attorney

Senator Kirk Dillard, R-Hinsdale

Justice Rodolfo Garcia, First District Appellate Court

Ted Gottfried, Illinois State Appellate Defender

Robert Haida, St. Clair County State's Attorney

Representative Patricia Reid Lindner, R-Aurora

Lisa Madigan, Illinois Attorney General

Terri L. Mascherin, Partner, Jenner & Block in Chicago

Michael Metnick, Partner, Metnick, Cherry & Frazier in Springfield

Giacomo A. "Jack" Pecoraro, Executive Director, Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police

Stephen Pugh, Partner, Pugh, Jones, Johnson & Quandt in Chicago

Ted Street, President, Illinois Fraternal Order of Police

Judge Michael P. Toomin, Cook County Circuit Court

#### **Governor's Representative**

Bill Buckner, Governor's Office

#### **CLEAR Special Advisor**

John F. Decker, Professor of Criminal Law  
DePaul University College of Law

#### **CLEAR Initiative Directors**

Peter G. Baroni, Partner, Leinenweber & Baroni

Jean M. Templeton, Attorney at Law

#### **Chicago Metropolis 2020 Staff**

Angela R. Rudolph, Program Director

Paula Wolff, Senior Executive

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