

# CLEAR Initiative

## *Criminal Law Edit, Alignment and Reform*

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*Governor James R. Thompson*

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## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO CONSIDER STREAMLINING OF ILLINOIS CRIMINAL CODE**

SPRINGFIELD, IL – Legislation has been introduced to clear up confusion and to eliminate redundancies and inconsistencies in the Illinois Criminal Code.

Senate Bill 100 would implement the recommendations of the Criminal Law Edit, Alignment and Reform (CLEAR) Commission, which conducted the first extensive study of the lengthy Illinois Criminal Code in 45 years.

Chaired by former Gov. James R. Thompson and former Illinois Appellate Court Justice Gino L. DiVito, the CLEAR Commission is composed of prominent and diverse experts in the criminal justice system, including prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges and law enforcement representatives.

Four legislators chosen by the Democratic and Republican leaders in the General Assembly serve on the CLEAR Commission. Attorney General Lisa Madigan and a representative of Gov. Rod Blagojevich also are active members of the commission. (A list of members is attached.)

“Each session of the General Assembly results in more and more additions and revisions to the Illinois Criminal Code,” said Sen. John Cullerton, D-Chicago, sponsor of SB 100. “Over the years, those changes have been well intended but not always carried out as carefully as they should have been. As a result of new acts, amendments and court rulings, today’s Code is far more complex and confusing than it should be.”

“Our Criminal Code is a mishmash,” said Sen. Kirk Dillard, R-Hinsdale, co-sponsor of SB 100. “However, this carefully crafted revision will reorganize and shorten the Code without changing the original intent of the legislature. After going over every sentence, word and comma in the Code, this diverse group of experienced judges, prosecutors, police officers and public defenders has reached consensus on how it can be streamlined and made easier for everyone to understand.”

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## CLEAR COMMISSION

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Cullerton and Dillard serve on the CLEAR Commission with Reps. Jim Durkin, R-Western Springs, and Robert S. Molaro, D-Chicago. All CLEAR Commission decisions were made by consensus and required the approval of all commission members.

“Because the current Criminal Code can be so hard to follow and is peppered with so many passages that courts have ruled unconstitutional, it often is interpreted incorrectly,” Durkin said. “Decisions made by judges and lawyers in a courtroom should be guided by a document that is logical and orderly and not one that can be compared to a jigsaw puzzle with missing pieces.”

For additional information about the background and work of the CLEAR Commission, visit [www.clearinitiative.org](http://www.clearinitiative.org).

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### **About the CLEAR Commission:**

The CLEAR Initiative was developed by staff at Chicago Metropolis 2020, a business-based civic organization promoting long-term planning and smart investment in the Chicago region and working for better outcomes in our legal and corrections systems.

Financial and in-kind support for the CLEAR Initiative has been provided by Bank One Foundation; the Chicago Bar Foundation; the Field Foundation; David Heller, Illinois Bar Foundation; the JEHT Foundation; the Joyce Foundation; Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw, LLP; the New Prospect Foundation; The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Rokit Fund, the Steans Family Foundation; the University of Chicago Law School; the Wieboldt Foundation; Winston & Strawn LLP; and the Woods Fund of Chicago.

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Governor James R. Thompson

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State's Attorney Joseph E. Birkett, DuPage County

Public Defender Edwin A. Burnette, Cook County

Justice Thomas E. Callum, Second District Appellate Court

Vincent Cornelius, Principle, Law Offices of Vincent Cornelius

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State's Attorney Richard Devine, Cook County

Senator Kirk Dillard, R-Hinsdale

Representative Jim Durkin, R-Western Springs

Justice Rodolfo Garcia, First District Appellate Court

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Attorney General Lisa Madigan

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Judge Michael P. Toomin, Cook County Circuit Court

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