

# **Destination Economy:**

## **Making Illinois Work Again**

**Kirk Dillard's plans to improve job-creation and retention**

### **ABSTRACT**

Kirk Dillard believes that Illinois can conduct an amazing turnaround in economic development, but it will take a new mindset in Springfield, patience to turn around the state's over-spending habits, and bold new leadership.

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## ***DESTINATION ILLINOIS***

### **OVERVIEW**

**I**llinois currently ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in the nation in job creation<sup>1</sup>. This sobering fact belies the many benefits this state has to offer, including top-flight higher education institutions, a centralized national location, first-rate transportation for goods and people, and a highly skilled workforce.

Our problems stem from a variety of factors, but most can be traced back to a negative business climate that is made worse by irresponsible leadership in Springfield. Fiscal mismanagement, the culture of clout, pay-to-play politics and partisan bickering has resulted in:

- ✓ Mounting deficits, especially public pension debt
- ✓ An overly complex tax and fee structure
- ✓ Negative reputation
- ✓ Confrontation between government and business.

Add to it out-of-control spending that has included the use of temporary resources for long-term and costly programs, skyrocketing healthcare costs, a contentious business/labor relationship and the lack of a clearly articulated long term strategy for job creation, and it's no wonder Illinois is facing its biggest challenges in a generation.

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<sup>1</sup> Sources: 2009 Alec-Laffer State Economic Competitive Index & the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics

## STABILIZING ILLINOIS' ECONOMY

In order to combat our economic challenges, Kirk Dillard as Governor will implement the most comprehensive economic development effort in the history of this state. Dillard will streamline state government and form a *job creation team* consisting of the “best and brightest” from public, private and educational sectors to help our economy back to life.

The team will leverage its intellectual power and experience to accomplish the following:

- **Promote long-term solutions** to the state’s three main fiscal obligations that drive of our deficit: public pension systems, Medicaid and health care costs.
- **Champion zero-based budgeting** where, on a rotation basis, state programs must re-build budgets from scratch to examine and justify every line item and programmatic functions.
- **Improve the state’s spending and planning process:** public appropriation hearings, line-by-line analyses of budgets, bipartisan scrutiny of spending plans, etc.
- **Introduce *Project Green Tape*** designed to examine fees, taxes, and regulatory matters in Illinois with the express goal of creating a more employer-friendly regulatory system.
- Examine and apply previously passed medical malpractice **tort reform legislation** to manufacturing and other sectors.
- **Develop the *Illinois Tomorrow Plan*** -- long-term plans to promote Illinois as a great place to build and grow a business through all auspices of the Office of the Governor. *Illinois Tomorrow* will recognize those areas of the state most in need of job creation and initiate programs designed to attract businesses to these corridors of opportunity. In addition, the program will set as a goal “taking advantage of our advantages” by exploring untapped possibilities in agriculture, the hospitality sector, and post-coal mining processes while it encourages infrastructure enhancements such as the Illiana Expressway.
- Launch a new generation of **financial services**, such as credit card processing centers, insurance company support offices and venture capital firms.

There is no shortcut to success. Diligent thought and effort will go into making Illinois an attractive place to do business once again. Employers need to know they can count on a stable tax and regulatory climate in order to remain competitive and create jobs. That's the essence of making Illinois a "Destination Economy."

#### **TO ADDRESS LOOMING WORKFORCE PROBLEMS:**

- Create the **Best in Class education program** that includes programs from early childhood development through continuing education and training in cutting-edge sectors of the business community.
- Revamp existing **training grant programs** to be more in line with the needs of employers.
- **Fund the implementation of pro-business education at all levels**, including new facilities inspired by the successful pilot program of Austin Poly-Tech High School.

#### **HELPING EMPLOYERS AFFORD HEALTH CARE COVERAGE:**

- While we wait for the outcome on the national debate on health care reform, Illinois will create a **pilot program** designed to allow small businesses and sole proprietors to pool their employees and take advantage of a reduced set of health care mandates.
- Impose a new **three-year moratorium on new health care mandates** to stop the escalating cost of health care for employers that has risen an average of 12 percent annually since 1999.

#### **LONG-RANGE STRATEGIC PLAN:**

- **Form the Illinois Jobs Creation Council.** The Council's goal will be simple: to facilitate a meaningful and ongoing dialog between business and labor in order to explore initiatives that will make Illinois more competitive with the frictional costs of doing business.
- **Create the *Illinois Innovates* program** at the University of Illinois and other Illinois institutions of higher education. This program will be designed to

- **Revitalize Illinois' commitment to agri-business and agriculture research** by restoring funding for the Illinois Council on Food and Agricultural Research (C-FAR), working to expand markets, and supporting the Vision for Illinois Agriculture that has been developed by the Illinois Farm Bureau and other agribusinesses.
- Further develop **energy-focused programs** and initiatives involving agri-fuels and coal-to-liquid fuel technologies that other countries have pioneered.

*End of Synopsis--details begin on next page.*

## BACKGROUND

Nearly two hundred years ago, in one of their first official actions, members of the original state legislature appropriated about \$60 to retire debt created by the territorial government. Today, Illinois faces record debt that threatens the long-term financial health of Illinois and its people. In 21<sup>st</sup> Century Illinois, elected leaders have abdicated their responsibility to balance the state budget—encouraged to do so by their own sense of public service coupled with the sophisticated communications and public relations of those at the public trough.

Corruption and ethical violations have eroded the public's trust in their leaders making it more difficult to solve problems and attract businesses to this state. And the economic meltdown and near collapse of the financial sector in the last two years have devastated an Illinois economy that never fully recovered from the last economic downturn.

### **In a nutshell:**

- In the last decade, Illinois' anemic job growth of 2.3 percent ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in the United States according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In that same timeframe, Illinois' average wages (adjusted for inflation) have dropped a staggering \$6,000 per year<sup>2</sup>.
- Illinois has lost over 300,000 jobs in the current recession<sup>3</sup>. As of September, 2009, Illinois unemployment rate stood at 10.5 percent. This is higher than any of our neighboring states except Kentucky.
- Historically, Illinois trails the US economy in both entering a recession and recovering from one. Economists state that Illinois had not regained jobs lost in the 2001-2002 national recession when our current problems began. Ranking fifth in the U.S., Illinois contributes 4.4 percent of the nation's Gross Product equating to more than \$630 billion. However, Illinois' growth in GSP since 2006 ranks 30<sup>th</sup> in the nation at slightly more than 4 percent.
- According to the most recent Small Business Administration report, the manufacturing industry was the state's largest small business employer. The 21,000 Illinois manufacturers have accounted for over 13% of Illinois' GDP and 95% of the total exports. Since 2000, the region has lost over 300,000

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<sup>2</sup> Source: University of Illinois' Regional Economics Applications Laboratory.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Illinois Dept. of Employment Security.

manufacturing jobs. Overwhelmingly, those jobs paid middle-class wages, provided health care plans and offered retirement benefits.

- At a time when we should be supporting small business, the Blagojevich/Quinn Administrations have actually reduced, or eliminated, matching funds for Small Business Development Centers, Procurement Assistance Centers and Manufacturing Extension Centers. Few would disagree that this jeopardizes our ability to maximize the use of federal funds to support Illinois small business. The amounts involved were small, but added volume to the state's perceived anti-employer voice.
- Illinois had \$48.7 billion dollars in exports in 2007 ranking it fifth nationally and clearly a leader in agricultural and manufacturing trade. However, the state has dramatically reduced its efforts to promote exporting and has sapped the funding for funding for the Illinois Council on Food and Agricultural Research.
- One of the prime areas of decision employers make when deciding where to expand their businesses are the costs associated with each state, such as workers' compensation and unemployment insurance. Illinois' average tax per employee for unemployment insurance is the seventh highest in the country. Illinois' duration of benefits is the third highest nationally and the average weekly benefit is in the top ten. Workers' Compensation rates have gone up 13.6% while other states have seen a decrease. Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin and Indiana all have lower rates and Indiana's is less than half that of Illinois.
- According a recent CNBC study on the "Top States for Business in 2009," Illinois' costs of doing business were higher than all of our surrounding states. For example, the much-publicized sales tax rate in Chicago (Cook County) is the highest in the United States. Such a distinction is a major statement and symbol of the overall anti-jobs climate in Illinois. Moreover, 40 percent of Illinois' out-of-state exports are consumed by neighboring Midwestern states. Our higher cost of conducting business threatens that sizable portion of our economy.
- According to a June, 2009, report in the *Chicago Tribune*, McCormick Place convention and trade shows are experiencing double-digit declines in attendance this year, affecting local hotels, restaurants and other businesses that cater to conventioners and tourists. This decline pierces Illinois' hospitality sector—one of the state's top performers over the past decade.



- Over the last 15 years Illinois and Chicago have lost significant revenues as a result of out-migration, especially of retirees. It is currently estimated that the state loses \$1.5 billion a year, due to out-migration, in state income and sales taxes.
- We have lost many of our best and brightest students to other states. “Illinois was only one of six states with net out-migration of college and graduate students,” according to the Illinois Education Research Council.
- Despite the presence of many prominent Illinoisan’s in our Nation’s Capitol, we are near the bottom of all states when it comes to return on our tax dollars that we send to Washington, DC.

## THE DILLARD PLAN

Like most taxpayers, Kirk Dillard recognizes that Illinois’ economy is in crisis and will take immediate action by forming a *Jobs Creation Team* to oversee and guide his office in its effort to stop the bleeding and render first aid to the businesses and people impacted by the poor economic environment.

Led by the Governor and composed of business executives, economists, academicians, labor experts and planners, the Jobs Team will implement a fully integrated command and control process recognizing that the state budget, workforce and human capital, tax policy, transportation, and government regulation are all interconnected and play vital roles in the success or failure of Illinois’ economy. For the first time in a more than a decade, Illinois will have one coordinated and integrated approach to create a strong economy that encourages job growth and business investment.

### **CHALLENGE: A more stable and predictable economy**

Employers want predictability and financial solvency in the state where they operate. Unfortunately, Illinois fails in both aspects. In at least the short-term, Illinois is a deadbeat state that fails to pay its bills on time, thereby causing great hardships among its citizens and businesses. Worse yet, this state faces a \$73 billion mountain of long-term debt that threatens our children and grandchildren with a legacy of red ink.

The “easy” remedy some lawmakers have sought to this problem further hurts job creation. Employers have been threatened with higher taxes and fees such as the Gross Receipts Tax and 50 percent hike in the state’s income tax to pay for the state’s past due

bills and continued out-of-control spending. **Business leaders continue to fear unpredictable actions and steer clear of investing in our state.**

✓ **ACTION: Put the brakes on spending.**

As Governor, Kirk Dillard will take immediate action to address the skyrocketing debt and effectively “cut up the state’s credit cards.” **Spending will be capped** at Fiscal 2010 levels for the foreseeable future. By prioritizing spending and expanding our efforts to find economies, Dillard will take the hard line that a crisis of this proportion demands.

Illinois will not begin to recover and rebuild its economy and create jobs until it stops digging a deeper hole by borrowing and spending. The Dillard Administration will utilize **zero-based budgeting** and embark on a process to rebuild state government from the ground up. Every program and expense will be scrutinized and only those that provide value will be retained. Those programs that show an economic return for the funds invested (i.e. CFAR) will be viewed as investment opportunities.

Kirk Dillard will make Illinois a business-friendly state by eliminating bureaucratic regulations that stifle growth and increase costs. He will introduce **Project Green Tape** to examine fees, taxes and regulations in Illinois with the goal of creating a more employer-friendly regulatory system in Illinois.

**No new regulations** will be created unless a cost-benefit analysis determines that they make fiscal sense. For example, companies seeking to take advantage of our rich agricultural heritage to build ethanol plants at times have to wait twice as long for permits in Illinois than they do in neighboring states. A Dillard administration will reform state rules, eliminate redundant or ineffective regulations, and streamline bureaucracy so that state government is a partner and not an obstacle for employers.

“Jackpot justice” and frivolous lawsuits from trial lawyers resulted in outrageous costs in the health care sector which decimated the ranks of doctors and other health care professionals in central and southern during the past decade. Senator Dillard sponsored many tort reform bills, including imposing caps on non-economic damages, during his tenure and will continue to be a leading advocate for **reforming our court system** to lower costs while continuing to protect real victims.

Intrinsic costs like Workers’ Compensation and Unemployment Insurance plague Illinois employers and make Illinois less competitive. Since 2006, thirty-two states have seen their Workers’ Compensation rates decrease while Illinois is one of just four states experiencing an increase. The state’s Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund funded by

taxes on employers is more than a billion dollars in debt and expected to rise to more than \$5 billion in 2011.

As Governor, Kirk Dillard will oppose new health care mandates that serve only to increase the cost of health care while failing to address efficiency or quality of care.

### **CHALLENGE: Workforce development**

Illinois will not attract and retain a strong employer base unless it seriously addresses the workforce challenge that is expected to grow more difficult with the retirement of 2.2 million people – or one-third of Illinois' workforce- in the coming decade according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The solution must begin early in the life of a child when they are most at-risk and there is the greatest chance to educate them and set them on a path for a successful future. It is tragic that nearly fifty percent of children that enter high school in Chicago will fail to graduate and less than five will successfully graduate from college. These students in Chicago and across the state represent the next generation of workers, and we must provide them the resources to learn and become productive members of society.

Illinois has extraordinary resources at our public and private universities, community colleges and workforce boards but lacks a coordinated strategy. Several years ago, the General Assembly created a P-20 Council advance a comprehensive plan for educating our youth. Appointments were finally made to the Council in November of 2009 after years of inaction and the loss of educational opportunity.

### **✓ ACTION: “Best in Class” education plan to meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century needs.**

The Dillard Administration will continue to invest in Early Childhood education and commit resources to training our workers to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century global economy. Illinois needs to set high standards for all children regardless of where they live and then provide the necessary tools to teachers, administrators, school boards and parents so that they can succeed at the local level without unnecessary government interference. The state will renew its commitment to make sure that every child can attend school safe from violence and prepared to learn. And we will focus on stemming performance erosion in the vital middle grades.

Illinois has always had a competitive advantage because of its skilled workforce which is attractive to employers. Kirk Dillard's *Best in Class* education program will build on prior achievements and fight to create the nation's best workforce in Illinois.

## **CHALLENGE: Seeing past the immediate crisis**

Several decades ago, counties across the Pacific Rim and many states created long-term economic goals and established a framework to attract specific industries. Illinois failed to plan for the long-term and consequently has fallen behind in economic development and job growth. Kirk Dillard has a plan to make Illinois and its communities a Destination Economy again.

Illinois cannot claim to be pro-business if the state has a poor labor force or terrible infrastructure. Similarly, Illinois cannot be an economic power if its tax system is punitive and discourages job creation and investment in the state. The Dillard Administration will enact new tax incentives to target specific industries that employ people in high-paying jobs with benefits. Using our great research institutions, Illinois should focus on creating high-tech jobs and encouraging growth in the health care sector.

## **✓ ACTION: Dillard's *Illinois Tomorrow* plan**

Funds to keep Illinois competitive cannot be planned for without a long-term, comprehensive and coordinated approach. The Dillard Administration will develop **long-term plans to invest in Illinois' infrastructure needs** – highways, mass transit, high speed rail, intermodal facilities, broadband, airports, and power grids to create a healthy and vibrant economy.

The Dillard plan will constantly encourage new capital projects and enhancements such as the Illiana Expressway, a new south suburban highway joining Interstate 57 in Illinois with I-65 in Indiana. This alternate will help relieve traffic congestion for motorists while speeding truck deliveries through the Chicago area. Such a project is part of a strategic vision to enhance Illinois as a “**distribution and transportation hub.**”

Kirk Dillard realizes that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work; nor does the concept that each department and program stands along. Therefore, he will create teams and programs for specific regions and industries in the state. For example, Rockford which has the highest unemployment rate in the state needs help to spur its devastated manufacturing sector while Southern Illinois needs to encourage tourism and create new sectors so that it does not continue to “export” our most valuable resource: people. Agriculture is a leading sector in the state and Illinois needs to support agricultural research and help get product to market.

In addition, Dillard will thoroughly examine the advantages that Illinois already has in the areas of agriculture, hospitality (tourism, etc.), and coal mining and processes. For

example, newly refined methods for coal to be turned into liquid fuel hold significant promise for an environmentally acceptable use for our rich supply of coal—a resource that could tremendously help revitalize the most economically challenged part of our state. Bio-diesel, ethanol and gas-from-coal projects could potentially have an impact on energy independence goals.

### **CHALLENGE: The business vs. labor hurdle**

Like most states, Illinois has a record of many contentious battles between business and labor interests in crucial legislation dealing with numerous economic issues. In the early 1980s, our state government, along with business and labor leaders, settled on an “agreed bill” process to encourage negotiation and compromise on key issues important to both sides. For the most part, that process has worked well.

### **✓ ACTIONS:**

#### **1. Illinois Creates**

Kirk Dillard strongly believes in maintaining the sanctity of the agreed-bill process. Recognizing that the process often only promotes communication when stakes are high and stances are far apart, Dillard will form on an ad-hoc basis the ***Illinois Jobs Creation Council***. The Council’s goal will be to seek areas of common-ground interest to promote creative ideas on the creation of jobs—something that benefits both sides. It is Dillard’s belief that finding those common areas of interest will spur better and more innovative ideas on attracting and keeping good-paying jobs in Illinois.

#### **2. Illinois Invests**

Dillard will introduce the *Illinois Invests*, a **business/labor/private sector coalition** that will join the best minds in all three areas to direct funds, human resources and educational research at attracting and retaining quality jobs.

#### **3. Illinois Innovates**

Dillard will create the *Illinois Innovates* initiative at the campuses of the University of Illinois and other state institutions of higher education. This program will be designed to encourage **cutting-edge research and development**, and will be accompanied by the nation’s most aggressive tax credit for research.

## **CHALLENGE: The health care problem**

In the past few years, Illinois has lost nearly 350,000 jobs from employers that provided health care coverage for their workers—undoubtedly one of the single biggest factors in the growing number of uninsured Illinois men, women and children. Kirk Dillard understands that taxing businesses that already provide health care benefits for workers to help pay for coverage of those without plans is counter-productive to job growth, and—in essence—treating the *symptom* of the problem, not the disease.

✓ **ACTION: Streamline mandates, encourage pooling, allow HMO deductibles.**

While we wait for the outcome on the national debate on health care reform, Illinois will create a **pilot program** designed to encourage a small businesses and sole proprietors to pool their employees into larger groups, remove certain coverage mandates, and allow health maintenance organizations to place reasonable deductible costs on their policies.

## **CHALLENGE: Focusing on the Future**

Kirk Dillard believes we should be using our limited general revenue resources to make sure we are maximizing every federal dollar that can flow through to the small business owners on “Main Street.” This includes supporting these businesses with tax credit enhancement programs and loans and streamlining health care mandates so the cost of providing care to employees is lowered. (An average small business employs fewer than 50 people.)

✓ **ACTIONS: Act. Measure. Adjust. Improve.**

- The Dillard Administration will continue to push for passage of “Illinois Innovation Zone legislation.” We cannot be competitive in the United States or in the global marketplace if we don’t embrace entrepreneurship, technology based business and commercialization and public-private partnerships that can attract and support targeted job creation and investment in new technologies.
- The Dillard Administration will hold an Illinois Venture Capital Summit and invite venture capitalists from throughout the Midwest to assist with a plan to fund companies ready for their first commercial installations. This plan will provide recommendations for responding to rapid growth in innovation and technology and how to increase venture capital needed to keep technology businesses in Illinois.

- We must open the doors to a **new generation of financial services**, such as credit card processing centers, insurance company support offices and venture capital firms. Illinois has been losing ground to other Midwestern states when it comes to the financial services industry. Chicago is already well-established to take on additional work on LaSalle Street and elsewhere in the Loop, but there is plenty of space in Illinois where new complexes could emerge. The use of fiber optics, broadband and other high tech communication options give employers enormous opportunities for where to locate their new facilities. Illinois can and should be the place where they decide to come.
- The Dillard Administration will continue to **promote the Illinois' travel and tourism industry** that employs more than 300,000 people and generates more than \$28 billion in revenue annually. Investing in tourism at the state mandated level would grow GRF revenues (\$1 to \$9 ratio), increase jobs by enhancing local tourism grant programs, allow Illinois to expand into new markets and retain and attract convention and trade shows. We must also place emphasis on maintaining existing tourism with the potential to expand and develop new tourism opportunities in Illinois that should be enhanced by the state's new efforts to define us as a destination economy.
- The Dillard Administration will **create and strengthen markets for Illinois farmers** and agribusiness. It will aid Illinois' 76,000 farms that generate more than \$9 billion annually. Illinois ranks second nationally in agricultural exports. Agribusiness adds additional billions of dollars to the value of our commodities and employs hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans. And Dillard will restore CFAR funding which has been proven to bring far more revenue to the state than it costs.
- The Dillard Administration will make Illinois an **energy leader using green technologies** to harvest alternative energy and adapting new scientific technology to utilize our current resources—such as the successful program in South Africa of turning coal into liquid fuel. Illinois has the highest capacity of nuclear power in the United States. There is more energy in Illinois coal reserves than all of the oil in the Middle East combined<sup>4</sup>. Illinois will be receiving 16% of its electricity from renewable energy, mainly comprising of solar and wind by 2020. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity estimates this will result in the creation of over 7,800 jobs.
- We must fund the **Illinois Technology Commercialization Program** that Governor Quinn decided to keep dormant. It will be funded with the additional requirement that private sector venture capital will be leveraged to increase the

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<sup>4</sup> Source: Coal Research Center at Southern Illinois University Carbondale

number of projects that may be funded.

- We must **stem the tide of manufacturing job losses** if we are to bring the Illinois economy back. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, “each dollar’s worth” of manufacturing goods creates another \$1.43 of activity in other sectors, twice the \$.71 multiplier of the services industry. Any investment to keep and increase these jobs more than pays for itself.
- The **Illinois Modernization & Retooling Program** will be reinstated to assist Manufacturers in making necessary reinvestments in their facilities to enable for them to remain competitive and keep their existing workforce in Illinois.
- The Dillard Administration will look at other innovative ways to spur the economy. Examples include a **tax credit** for new jobs created, a **sales tax holiday** to spur retail sales and a **letter of credit** program to allow projects to proceed and create jobs.

Jobs are the key to bringing Illinois’ economy back.

## **KIRK DILLARD’S RECORD OF SUCCESS**

As the Chief of Staff in Governor Jim Edgar’s Administration and a State Senator for 16 years, Dillard has made job creation and economic growth a priority. In fact, a University of Illinois report showed that the Edgar era marked the *greatest job growth in Illinois history*.

**Kirk Dillard has been a leader of science and technology** as the Chair of the Senate High Technology Task Force, as well as sponsoring and supporting numerous legislative initiatives in this area. He was a long standing member of the Illinois Coalition, and was on the team that went to North Carolina to select a prototype for the first Math-Science Academy in Illinois.

Just last year, Senator Dillard, along with the Senate Republican Caucus, proposed legislation to “shock” the Illinois economy back to life. The stimulus plan would have provided a \$10 billion boost to the Illinois economy and immediately create at least 40,000 jobs; however, the Democratic leadership in Springfield refused to consider the proposals.



Kirk Dillard's record on economic development spans every spectrum, from a champion of tort reform, to the framer of the Edge Tax Credit, to the expansion of the Convention & Tourism Industry in Illinois.

Specifically, **Kirk Dillard's record** speaks for itself:

- Supported the single largest unemployment insurance tax cut in Illinois history that saved employers \$126 million in 1996 and more than one billion dollars total. (P.A. 89-0644)
- Sponsored the economic development package that lured the corporate headquarters of Boeing and hundreds of jobs to Illinois. (P.A. 92-0207)
- Successfully passed a new venture capital program used to attract and retain high-growth technology companies in Illinois. (P.A. 92-0851)
- Co-sponsored a new incentive for tourism and the film production industry that increased revenue from \$23 million to \$155 million and created 4,000 jobs in Illinois. (P.A. 93-0543)
- Championed the expansion of McCormick Place and Navy Pier in Chicago that attracts hundreds of trade shows and millions of visitors to Illinois annually. (P.A. 91-0101)
- Co-sponsored legislation extending critical tax incentives for manufacturing companies and graphic arts businesses. (P.A. 96-0116)
- Co-sponsored legislation during the spring, 2009 legislative session to provide technology-based companies and institutions with tax credits and financial assistance if they are located in certain "innovation zones." (SB 2109)

Senator Dillard's record spans every spectrum, from a champion of lawsuit reform to the framer of the Edge tax credit to the expansion of the Convention and Tourism Industry.

## CONCLUSION

The most important thing for Illinois economy is a **stable jobs climate**. We must create jobs, expand the economic base and stem the flow of jobs from Illinois is to create a stable and solvent State Government. Two key factors will be balancing the state's budget and bringing real ethics reform to Springfield which reduces the cost of corruption and encourages growth.

Budget reform starts with pension reform and Medicaid reform. In addition, we will streamline every aspect of state government, implement zero-based budgeting and justifying every program line by line. We will introduce Project Green Tape to reduce excessive taxes, fees and bureaucracy that can drive employers out of Illinois. The Illinois Jobs Creation Council will help break down barriers and improve communication between business and labor.

**“Destination Illinois” seeks to lower the cost of doing business** in the state by reducing the cost of providing health insurance and revisiting comprehensive legal (tort) reform. The plan will also create new tax incentives for high growth sectors such as technology and health care.

The Dillard plan addresses the future needs of Illinois' workforce by revitalizing existing Job Training Grant Programs to be more in line with the needs of existing employers. The Illinois Innovates Program and other colleges and universities will encourage cutting-edge research and development.

The Dillard plan announces to the world that Illinois is once again “open for business” for job creators and innovators. Kirk Dillard has the experience, the leadership skills and the plan to allow Illinois to regain its leadership role and transform into the **“Destination Economy”** we all deserve.

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