



# Letter of Welcome

Dear Friend:

Welcome to our inaugural Legislators' Guide to the Issues. This guidebook is not a dramatic novel nor work of history or art, but it does tell an interesting tale.

I grew up in Michigan, a state that is in the full throes of what I call the economic death spiral. Its prospects for prosperity have been in long decline—and the pace is quickening. I moved to Illinois in 1985; in 2007 I got engaged in public policy because I could see that my beloved, adopted state was making the same public policy mistakes that my native Michigan had done.

During school in the '60s and '70s when we studied geography and other subjects, Illinois always stood out as a place of power and prestige. It stood as a colossus of economic might. Illinois built the tallest buildings; it reversed rivers; it produced more manufacturing goods than just about any other state; it was an agricultural and energy giant; it was a transportation hub by road, by rail and by river; and it was a pioneer in financial markets.

As rural kid growing up in West Michigan I was drawn to Illinois. Around the lakes near my home, Chicagoans would come north to relax in Michigan's beauty. One couple had a place on Hamlin Lake near Ludington, and they would tell story after story about life in Illinois and Chicago. It all revolved around a can-do spirit—the American spirit—of opportunity, self-reliance and accomplishment. They were proud to be from Illinois.

Not so much today. We are embarrassed by our reputation for corruption. We are worried about our long economic decline. And too many—far too many who work in Springfield—are resigned to a destiny that will inexorably follow the path of Michigan.

It does not have to be that way. And that is why we are providing this guidebook.

We see these ideas as common-sense solutions to what ails our state. The solutions won't be easy and they will require political courage. Real reform and revitalization will allow Illinois to again stand proud as an economic powerhouse and a beacon of prosperity.

Illinois competes with 49 other states and the rest of the world. The rules of the game that worked in the '60s and '70s no longer work. We can no longer afford the corruption premium. We can no longer afford a business and tax climate

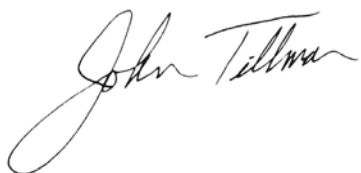
hostile to entrepreneurs, investors and workers. We can no longer afford to sentence our poor and disadvantaged children to a failing school system.

Three simple stats tell the current tale: Illinois ranks third to last in economic performance; Illinois ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in net out-migration; and Illinois is 48<sup>th</sup> in cumulative non-farm employment growth from 1997 till 2007.

We can do better. This guidebook provides solutions that will put our once great state on the road to recovery. We hope you will use it. We are here as a resource to expand on these ideas in any way that you may find helpful.

Best of luck in the legislative session and remember, we have a new story to tell for Illinois—will you help us tell it?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Tillman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

John Tillman  
CEO