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August 27, 2021

To the Honorable Members of the
Illinois Senate
The 102nd General Assembly

Today, I return Senate Bill 539, a bill amending the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act, with specific recommendations to correct one technical drafting error.

I am pleased by progress made by my partners in the General Assembly in their efforts to pass meaningful ethics reform, and I support the steps taken in this bill.

In the changes made to 5 ILCS 430/20-20(1), however, language was inadvertently added that confuses and interferes with the existing processes of the Executive Inspectors General (EIGs) in an unintended way. For example, the changes included in Senate Bill 539 include a reference to proceeding “without advance approval of the Executive Ethics Commission” to investigate allegations of wrongful conduct within his or her jurisdiction. However, advance approval of the Executive Ethics Commission has never been required. The addition of this language inadvertently confuses the clear authority that the EIGs have under current law.

Therefore, pursuant to Article IV, Section 9(e) of the Illinois Constitution of 1970, I hereby return Senate Bill 539, entitled, “An ACT concerning State Government,” with the following specific recommendations for change: Beginning on page 43, line 16 and continuing through page 44, line 4, delete the changes made in SB 539 and restore the language of the existing law so that it reads as follows:

(1) To receive and investigate allegations of violations of this Act. An investigation may not be initiated more than one year after the most recent act of the alleged violation or of a series of alleged violations except where there is reasonable cause to believe that fraudulent concealment has occurred.

With this change to restore the original language of 5 ILCS 430/20-20 (1), Senate Bill 539 will have my approval.

Sincerely,

Governor JB Pritzker