

Hundreds of statewide and local residents turned out today for a Symposium on Corruption held in Bensenville, Illinois, just outside of Chicago. Sponsored by Citizens Against Government Waste, the symposium brought together leaders from throughout the state to debate and discuss how to unravel the economic and social cost of corruption in Illinois, provide ideas for effective government reform and restoring voter confidence. The Symposium took place at Fenton Community High School in Bensenville, IL.

Terry Brunner, executive director of the Aviation Integrity Project, said, "This isn't just suburbanites watching and laughing at the most corrupt city in the nation. Instead we're all furious, perceived back-room deals have become the Illinois national past-time. Here at home, jobs and contracts are the heart of corruption. In the classic Chicago sense, jobs and contracts equal campaign contributions and reciprocity, the mother's milk of politics."

Panels included: The cost of public corruption in dollars and sense and Moving beyond corruption -- Dissecting the Illinois Machine. Representing the panels were Garrard McClendon of ChicagoLand Television, Terry Brunner, executive director of the Aviation Integrity Project, David Morrison of the Illinois Coalition for Political Reform (ICPR), Steve Rhodes of the Beachwood Reporter, Mark LaMet, Medill School of Journalism and Bill Dwyer of the Wednesday Journal Newspapers

The crowd was larger than expected and the audience peppered the panelists with concerns, ideas and questions. "Of course there is citizen and voter frustration out there with the recent scandals in Springfield and City Hall," said David Morrison of the Illinois Coalition for Campaign Finance Reform. "I applaud the people of Bensenville and surrounding areas who came out today to essentially say corruption is unacceptable."

During the panel discussion, O'Hare expansion contracts, corruption and cronyism were mentioned more than once. The O'Hare Modernization Program (OMP) is currently stalled due to lack of funding and disagreements about the design.

The emcee for the event was John Geils, Village President of Bensenville who commented, "As a leader and public servant I'm very concerned about the State and City's reputation. To know we are at the pinnacle doesn't make any of us feel better. When it comes to the future of our town and O'Hare Airport, we're all frustrated with the tactics used by the City to promote such a flawed plan. The OMP is a runway to nowhere. It won't help with delays and will cost the taxpayers \$20 billion."