

# Senator wants trustee elections

## Proposal filed in hopes to get rid of board politics

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Two actions taken by State Sen. Bill Brady, R-Bloomington, on Friday could influence the University.

Brady filed legislation that would change the way trustees are selected to serve on the Board of Trustees. Trustees are currently appointed by the governor and must be confirmed by the State Senate.

Brady's proposal would make the trustees elected officials, effectively reversing a 1995 legislative decision establishing the current selection process.

"Important decisions made by this board have been done in ways I question," Brady told the Daily Illini. "It's time to go back to an elected board."

He said the board tends to follow what the governor wants.

Brady's proposal to change the selection process would not eliminate politics from the board, trustee David Dorris of Bloomington said.

"The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence, but there are also serious problems with electing trustees," Dorris said. "Electing trustees is just as political as if they were appointed by the governor."

The trustee positions don't have enough visibility in the state for voters to take an interest in learning about the candidates, Dorris said.

"The certainty is that neither system will remove politics," he said.

Brady disagreed and said elected forms of government are more responsible because they are accountable to voters.

Neither form of selecting the trustees does enough to include "the University of Illinois family," Dorris said. He suggested giving a formal body the power to review trustee candidates and then make a non-binding recommendation to the governor.

"If the public knew the ratings, it would make it embarrassing or difficult for a governor

to appoint somebody purely on a political basis," he said.

Brady confirmed he had also sent a letter to Attorney General Lisa Madigan requesting an investigation into the decision to retire Chief Illiniwek as the symbol of the University.

The letter specifically requested the office look into any violation of the Open Meetings Act, a charge the University and the board have consistently denied.

Dorris said he does not believe there was any violation of the Act because Chairman Lawrence Eppley never conducted a vote when he contacted the members of the board prior to the Feb. 16 announcement.

The characterization of the decision as a board action was the problem, he said.

"I don't think Larry Eppley violated the law," Dorris said. "I know in his interactions with me, he didn't. I'm only disappointed in the way it was done and how it was represented."

Madigan's office received Brady's letter late Friday afternoon and are reviewing it, a spokesman for Madigan said.

He could not say when any action would be taken by the office.