

WASHINGTON— Last night, U.S. Reps. Mike Quigley (D-IL) and Bill Foster (D-IL) introduced an amendment that would prohibit any federally appropriated highway funds from being used to prevent states from enacting anti-pay-to-play laws. Pay-to-play is a practice where campaign contributions are exchanged for profitable government contracts.

“It’s sadly ironic that when the state of Illinois attempts to curb corruption the federal government stands in its way,” said Quigley. “States should have the ability to ensure their contracting conforms to the highest ethical standards and offers the best to the taxpayers. Congressman Foster and I believe it is not the FHWA’s place to second guess a state on what is the most ethical way to award contracts.”

“People around the country – especially here in Illinois – are tired of scandals that compromise taxpayer dollars and betray the public’s trust,” added Foster. “I am proud to work with my colleague, Congressman Quigley, to bring fairness and accountability to contracting processes that have too often fallen victim to corruption.”

In 2008, the Illinois General Assembly tried to enact a strong anti-pay-to-play law to bring transparency and accountability to government contracting. However, actions taken by the Federal Highway Administration forced Illinois to weaken this provision, effectively creating a loophole for pay-to-play.

The Representatives offered an amendment to H.R. 5850, the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. The Quigley-Foster amendment would stop the Federal Highway Administration from continuing to prohibit states to enact contracting reform that eliminates pay-to-play.

Throughout his first term in Congress, Quigley has made transparency and accountability cornerstones of his legislative agenda. Last summer, he [introduced the State Ethics Law Protection Act](#), which provided the framework for yesterday’s amendment.