

Kirk W. Dillard

Partner

Chicago

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Kirk brings extensive experience in business and governmental relations in Illinois and across the U.S.

OVERVIEW

Kirk brings a wealth of experience in business and governmental relations. As the chairman of the Regional Transit Authority in metropolitan Chicago and the independent chair of the Chicago Skyway Toll Road, he has a deep understanding of infrastructure and transportation issues. Kirk's clients range from major oil and automobile manufacturers to health insurers, telemedicine companies, and national trucking firms.

Kirk is a frequent speaker throughout the U.S. on transportation infrastructure, tort reform, and civil justice. He also contributes newspaper, bar journal, and law review columns and articles. Kirk's scholarly writings have been cited multiple times by the Illinois Supreme Court and are on the "Recommended Reading" List of the *National Law Journal*.

Recently, Kirk served as a member of Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker's Restoring Illinois Infrastructure Transition Committee. He also served as the co-chair of Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson's Transportation Transition Team.

In 1994, Kirk was elected an Illinois state senator, representing Chicagoland's western suburbs, before stepping down after nearly 20 years of service in 2014. He was chairman of the Judiciary Committee, chairman of the Senate Local Government Committee, and vice chairman of the Rules Committee, and he served on the Licensed Activities and Energy and Environment Committees. Kirk was also chairman of the Senate High-Technology Task Force and a member of the "Illinois Coalition," a corporate, academic, and governmental board that works to strengthen the Illinois economy through the advancement of science and technology.

Before he left the firm at the invitation of Illinois Gov. Jim Edgar to become his chief of staff in 1991, Kirk's governmental experience included the Medical Malpractice Task Force and the site selection commission for a third Chicagoland airport. He had served as director of legislative affairs to former Gov. James R. Thompson, and Kirk was a court of claims judge from 1987 to 1991.

Kirk has served as an instructor in legal writing, research, and moot court at the DePaul University College of Law. He has also served as a lecturer on legislation and statutory interpretation at Loyola University, Chicago, and DePaul University Law Schools. Kirk currently is a member of DePaul University College of Law's Dean's Advisory Board and a mentor to the Graduate School of Public Policy Studies at the University of Chicago.

AWARDS

- *Leading Lawyers*
- *Crain's Chicago Business*, "Who's Who in Chicago Business"
- American Public Transportation Association, "Best of the Best" Award
- Illinois Chamber of Commerce, Champion of Free Enterprise
- Illinois Farm Bureau, Friend of Agriculture
- *West Suburban Living*, Most Influential Local Resident
- IL Equal Justice Foundation, Champion of Justice Award
- Outstanding Service to DePaul University Award
- Western Illinois University, Distinguished Alumni Award
- College of DuPage, Presidential Leadership Medal
- Hinsdale Central High School Hall of Fame
- Delta Sigma Phi National Fraternity, Executive Directors Award
- National Republican Legislators Association, Legislator of the Year

TOP AREAS OF FOCUS

- Gaming
- Government + Regulatory
- Local Government Services
- Transportation

ALL AREAS OF FOCUS

- Corporate
- Gaming
- Government + Regulatory
- Lobbying + Public Affairs
- Local Government Services
- Public Finance
- Transportation

PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Member, Illinois Coalition
- Member, Economic Club of Chicago
- Member, Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission
- Member, Illinois State Bar Association
- Member, Chicago Bar Association
- Board of Directors, Intersect Illinois
- Board of directors, College of DuPage Foundation
- Board of directors, Downers Grove Economic Development Corporation

- Board of trustees, Western Illinois University
- Member, DePaul University College of Law Dean's Advisory Board
- Mentor, Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, University of Chicago

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Chairman, Regional Transit Authority, Metropolitan Chicago
- Independent chair, Chicago Skyway Toll Road
- Illinois state senator, 1994-2014
- Chief of staff, Illinois Governor Jim Edgar, 1991
- Director of legislative affairs, former Governor James R. Thompson
- Court of claims judge, 1987-1991
- Member, Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker's Restoring Illinois Infrastructure Transition Committee
- Co-chair, Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson's Transportation Transition Team

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

EDUCATION

- Western Illinois University, Doctorate of Humane Letters, 2015
- DePaul University College of Law, J.D., 1982, ABA Award/Urban; State & Local Government Law
- Western Illinois University, *with honors*, 1977, WIU Student of the Year

BAR ADMISSIONS

- Illinois

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Speaker, "Energy Issues and Persuading Legislators, Governor's and Agency Policymakers," Illinois Energy Association, September 17, 2025.
- Panelist, "Chicagoland Mass Transit Consolidation," Chamber 630, September 16, 2025.
- Speaker, "Chicago at a Crossroads: Next Stop, Economic Vitality – The High-Stakes Future of Chicago Transit," Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, May 5, 2025.
- Keynote speaker, "Illinois Government and Politics—transit too," Illinois Government Affairs Group (IGAG), February 3, 2025.
- Speaker, "Transforming Transit," City Club of Chicago, January 15, 2025.
- Speaker, "Mass Transit Today and the Impending 'Fiscal Cliff,'" The Lawyers Club of Chicago, December 5, 2024.
- Speaker, "John Hallwas Liberal Arts Lecture," Western Illinois University, April 9, 2024.
- Speaker, "Making Sausage and Legislation in Illinois," Chicago Bar Association, January 29, 2024.
- Speaker, "Presentation to Board of Directors," Civic Federation Board, July 20, 2023.
- Speaker, "The Future of Public Transportation in Chicagoland," Lincoln Forum and the Union League Club of Chicago, June 15, 2023.
- Speaker, "The Future of Public Transportation in Chicagoland," Lincoln Forum in partnership with the Union League Club of Chicago, April 13, 2023.

- Speaker, City Club of Chicago Luncheon, February 22, 2023.
- Keynote speaker, American Council of Engineering Companies of Illinois Regional Luncheon, November 7, 2022.
- Speaker, “Chicago’s Public Transportation Challenge,” *Crain’s Chicago Business* Transportation Event Series, September 24, 2020.
- Speaker, “Meeting and Overcoming Regional Transit Challenges in the Time of COVID-19,” Chicago Central Area Committee, May 19, 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

- Podcast, “12 Days of Regulatory Insights: Day 9 – The Economic Development Edge,” *Regulatory Oversight Podcast*, December 16, 2025.
- Author, “What We Know and What is Ahead: COVID-19 Financial Assistance,” *Locke Lord QuickStudy*, April 21, 2020.

MEDIA COMMENTARY

- Quoted, “Dillard generally is considered to be one of the more honorable, affable, and respected people in state government,” *Springfield State Journal Register*.
- Quoted, “Kirk Dillard...is respected not only in the Governor’s office, but throughout state government,” *Chicago Tribune*.
- Quoted, “Dillard has a reputation for being able to get along with all types and factions. No one possesses the bipartisan chops of Dillard...No other candidate (for governor) comes close to matching his experience in the executive or legislative branches of state government and his proven ability to build cross-party coalitions, without abandoning core Republican values,” *Chicago Sun Times*.
- Quoted, “Thanks to a good rapport with my Republican counterpart, Kirk Dillard, we passed the first ethics reforms in 25 years in Illinois,” President Barack Obama, “A Promised Land” – Presidential Memoir.
- Quoted, “His constituents were fortunate to have him working on their behalf in Springfield. The Regional Transportation Authority is gaining a wonderful leader with his knowledge and experience will bring value as Chairman,” Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner.
- Quoted, “Kirk’s efforts have made a significant difference in the lives of millions of people throughout the region and beyond,” Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel.
- Quoted, “Dillard is thoughtful and responsible,” *The Daily Herald*.
- Quoted, “Dillard earns high marks in his responsiveness and effectiveness,” *The Doings Newspaper*.
- Quoted, “Politician with the most integrity,” *West Suburb Living Magazine*.