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from Kifowit for Comptroller Campaign

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 12, 2026

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State Representative Stephanie Kifowit Proposes “People First Initiative” for the Comptroller's Office

The plan includes creating a first-ever Labor Division, Nonprofit & Community Based Division and Computer Modernization Plan to include a public voucher dashboard to provide transparency and hold the state accountable to its partners.

OSWEGO, IL – State Representative Stephanie Kifowit, a Democratic candidate for Illinois Comptroller with over 20 years of government finance experience, today announced a bold new direction for the office of the Comptroller.

“As a state representative, I have worked with three different Comptrollers who have done an amazing job,” stated Kifowit. “But despite their best efforts, problems still exist today that we need to address through our People First Initiative”.

The People First Initiative (PFI) is based on her extensive experience with not only the state budget but also from a decade of local government experience. The People First Initiative is a mindset within the Comptroller's office to think outside the box on how we can better serve the residents of the state of Illinois. This Initiative contains three main components that Kifowit will enact when elected Comptroller.

“It is important to root out any violations of the Prevailing Wage Act, misclassifying workers, or skirting pension and benefit contributions,” stated Kifowit. “If companies receive taxpayer incentives, the Comptroller’s office will audit them to ensure the promised jobs were created. Taxpayer dollars should not go to bad actors who are trying to cheat hard working men and women out of the benefits they deserve or jobs they promise to create,”

- I. **Create a dedicated Labor Division.** Stemming from Kifowit’s unwavering support of Labor and recognizing the National anti-labor movement, she is proposing expanding the current Prevailing Wage Division into The Labor Division. This dedicated team will

move beyond just checking a certified payroll for prevailing wage enforcement. They will conduct proactive, pre-payment audits of all Illinois labor laws, including state OSHA standards in a time of weakening National OSHA standards, to catch violations *before* taxpayer dollars go out the door. In addition, Kifowit will work with the General Assembly to codify the Comptroller's Executive Order 19-01 into Illinois State Law. The Division will modernize the existing prevailing wage online database to make it more accountable and transparent, in addition to being more user friendly.

- II. **Create a Nonprofit & Community-Based Division.** Throughout her years in the General Assembly, Representative Kifowit has worked with many non-profits who have struggled to receive the needed state funding they were allocated. The Nonprofit Community-Based Division will address the bureaucratic delays that threaten the stability of social services across Illinois. Dedicated staff will serve as a direct point of contact for nonprofits, helping them navigate payment issues, troubleshoot delays with state agencies, and ensure their funding moves through the system efficiently. The Division will also create and maintain a public-facing, user friendly online dashboard showing the status of grant payments owed to nonprofit organizations.

"For too long, our critical social service nonprofits have been forced to take out lines of credit and struggle to make payroll because the state is slow to deliver on the funding promises made in its budget," said Kifowit. "I've seen firsthand, especially during the Rauner budget impasse, how this decimates our social safety net. The Comptroller has a duty to be more than just a bill-payer; it must be an advocate and a partner for the organizations that serve our most vulnerable."

Kifowit's plan addresses a critical bottleneck in state funding. While the legislature appropriates funds, the distribution is managed by state agencies, which can be slow to process grants and issue vouchers for payment. This often forces nonprofits to wait months, sometimes nearly an entire fiscal year, to access their allocated funding. Kifowit will also work with the General Assembly to pass legislation that reimburses nonprofits for the interest they incur on loans taken out due to the state's failure to distribute funding in a timely manner.

"This isn't just about efficiency; it's about morality," Kifowit stated. "When a domestic violence shelter wonders if it can keep its lights on, or a senior meal program can't buy food because they're waiting for the state to process a grant, the system is broken. My plan will cut through the red tape, provide unprecedented transparency, and ensure our partners can focus on their mission—not their cash flow."

- III. **Modernization and Technological Upgrades:** Upgrading to Smarter Systems for

Accuracy and Accountability. Kifowit will continue the strategic modernization of the Comptroller's office to increase efficiency, eliminate costly payroll errors, and ensure every taxpayer dollar is accounted for. This means investing in modern Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems to streamline operations, implementing advanced data analytics to proactively detect anomalies and fraud, and creating user-friendly digital portals for vendors and local governments. However, technology should empower people, not replace them. Her approach is to be mindful that technological advancement does not come at the cost of jobs. She will sign an Executive Order that prohibits any initiative that uses AI or automation to eliminate positions. The goal is a more effective, error-free office that protects both public funds and public employees.

In addition, modernization will enable the Comptroller's office to review fund balances, the effects of fund sweeps, and report out low balance funds that have payment delays associated with them, such as the CIP program, which has a bill backlog of over one year for retiree health insurance payments.

“By continuing to modernize the antiquated computer systems of the Comptroller's office, we can not only make sure the delayed transfers that are being seen today are addressed, but we can also be at the ready when it comes to securing Federal Funding”, stated Kifowit. “What happened with Illinois residents only receiving partial SNAP benefits in November should not happen again.”

During the Federal Shutdown, November 1, 2025 was a critical date for SNAP benefits. There was an appellate court decision that forced full SNAP payments. Half a dozen states were at the ready and received full SNAP payments for their residents - Illinois was not one of them. An individual can receive a monthly maximum food benefit of nearly \$300 and a family of four up to nearly \$1,000, although many receive less than that under a formula that takes into consideration their income.¹

“Other states worked through the night to make sure their residents got the benefits they needed for food, and it is glaring that Illinois was not one of them,” stated Kifowit. “Illinois residents received partial payments and that is not right. As Comptroller, I will make sure these situations do not happen again in these uncertain times.”

Kifowit emphasized that her extensive experience as a State Representative of over 12 years on state budget internal working groups and on Appropriation and Revenue committees, especially during the 2 ½ year budget impasse, in addition to her Master's in Public Administration with a

focus on government finance and private sector experience as a Registered Financial advisor, make her uniquely qualified to implement the People First Initiative (PFI) on day one.

About Stephanie Kifowit:

Stephanie Kifowit is the Democratic candidate for Illinois Comptroller with the direct state experience required for the role. As a State Representative, she has served on key financial committees, overseeing state budgets and pensions. Her two decades in government finance, combined with her background as a U.S. Marine Veteran, former financial adviser, and Aurora City Council member, make her the only candidate with the proven fiscal expertise and discipline to be Illinois' Chief Financial Officer.

1. [Trump admin asks Supreme Court to halt order providing full SNAP payments for November](#)

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