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August 21, 2007

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## **Will You Take Responsibility Now, Mr. Ryan?**

### **Statement from Better Government Association**

By Dan Sprehe, Chief Investigator

25 years ago, the Better Government Association (BGA) and *Chicago Sun-Times* found a Kankakee pharmacy, owned by then-Illinois House Speaker George Ryan, mysteriously regained \$60,000 of annual business from a troubled nursing home. This was following Ryan's successful efforts to block an investigation into that facility, which contained serious safety and health violations. Ryan called the facts and inherent implications revealed by the BGA and *Sun-Times* "outright and damnable lies."

Similar responses followed the work of the BGA and NBC Unit-5 during the early 1990's, when inspectors from Secretary of State Ryan's office were filmed raising political cash on state time. This was in addition to numerous statements from SOS employees, who were pressured to sell tickets for Ryan's political fundraisers, and auto-shop owners who were pressured to buy them from the state inspectors that could easily close their businesses. Ryan and his allies dismissed the evidence as a political attack, using terms like "sham" and "mockery".

Even in April 2006, George Ryan, who had once vowed to accept responsibility if a jury found him guilty of corruption charges, began immediately attacking the jury that had, moments earlier, done just that. In an argument suited more for a man pleading for his proverbial entrance to heaven, Ryan said the verdict was not "in accordance with the kind of public service that I provided to the people of Illinois over 40 years..."

The BGA believes the verdict was exactly in accordance with a series of actions George Ryan took while in public office. The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals agreed today.

So now, we must wonder, will today be the day George Ryan accepts responsibility for abusing his office? On this day, will he take the blame for his employees selling Commercial Drivers Licenses to help fund his political career? The answer is predictable. We will just wait and see whom this convicted felon will blame for his downfall this time.

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