



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 27, 2026

### **SWANN STATEMENT ON SENATE DEBATE: "PROGRESSIVE COSPLAY IS NOT LEADERSHIP"**

*Campaign calls out Stratton's silence on Palestine, Krishnamoorthi's ICE vote as proof establishment Democrats lack moral courage.*

CHICAGO - Christopher Swann, candidate for U.S. Senate, issued the following statement after Monday's debate between the three establishment candidates vying to replace Senator Dick Durbin:

"Last night's debate confirmed what Illinois voters already know: the establishment has nothing to offer but warmed-over talking points and tactical positioning. Congressman Krishnamoorthi, Lieutenant Governor Stratton, and Congresswoman Kelly spent an hour attacking each other over corporate PAC money and who's the bigger fighter against Trump, but not one of them could articulate a vision for what they're actually fighting for.

"Lieutenant Governor Stratton attacked Congressman Krishnamoorthi for his June 2025 vote thanking ICE while Robin Kelly voted NO. She attacked him for taking \$29,000 from Palantir's CTO, a company that holds ICE contracts, and only returning it after the Chicago Sun-Times exposed him in December 2025. These attacks are correct. They needed to be said.



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"Congressman Krishnamoorthi voted to thank the same ICE agents who killed Renee Nicole Good on January 7th. He took contractor money and stayed silent when it mattered. He claims to have 'inspected ICE facilities' but somehow that inspection didn't lead him to call for abolishing the agency until it became politically convenient in January 2026. His record speaks for itself.

"But Lieutenant Governor Stratton's performance last night was something worse than typical establishment politics. It was progressive cosplay. And it's dangerous.

"Stratton wants you to believe she's the outsider progressive fighter. She says she'll 'abolish ICE.' She says she won't support Chuck Schumer. She says she refuses corporate PAC money. But every one of these positions was adopted in the last six months for tactical reasons, not because of moral conviction.

"Where was 'abolish ICE' in 2017? 2018? 2019? 2020? 2021? 2022? 2023? 2024? ICE has been terrorizing Illinois communities since Trump's first term. Lieutenant Governor Stratton had a statewide platform. She chairs the Justice, Equity and Opportunity Initiative. She could have called for abolishing ICE any time in the last seven years. She waited until January 2026, 50 days before a primary, when two ICE agents killed American citizens and she needed to distinguish herself from two congresspeople.



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"Where was Medicare for All support in 2020 when it was on the ballot?"

When Bernie Sanders was fighting for it against Joe Biden and it was the defining progressive issue? State-level elected officials across the country, Keith Ellison in Minnesota, Eleni Kounalakis in California, used their platforms to fight for it. Lieutenant Governor Stratton, with a statewide megaphone, said nothing. Now in 2026, when it's safe progressive positioning with zero stakes, she's suddenly all-in on Medicare for All.

"Where was opposition to corporate money in 2016? 2017? 2018? The Chicago Sun-Times reports she accepted nearly a quarter of a million dollars in direct corporate contributions to her state campaigns since 2016 from Illinois Bankers PAC, Restaurant PAC, Manufacturers PAC, Hotel PAC, AT&T, United Airlines, and Merchants PAC. She only made her 'no corporate PAC' pledge after building statewide name recognition with corporate cash.

"And even now, she's just playing word games. She won't take corporate PAC money, but she'll take money from the people who run the corporations. According to the Sun-Times, her Senate campaign has received \$21,000 from the CEO and COO of Marquis Energy, \$7,000 from White Sox and Bulls owner Jerry Reinsdorf, \$7,000 from his son Michael Reinsdorf who runs the Bulls, \$7,000 from Cubs co-owner Laura Ricketts, and \$3,500 from a cannabis company CEO. Don't piss on our feet and tell us it's raining.



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Corporate executives maxing out to your campaign is still corporate money. And she's backed by a super PAC funded by her boss, a billionaire, that just violated FEC disclosure law in its first week.

"But here's what reveals Lieutenant Governor Stratton's true character: her silence on this generation's defining moral issue.

"Over 46,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza. Thousands of children. Entire family lines erased. Our tax dollars fund the bombs. Our government provides diplomatic cover. The International Court of Justice has issued rulings. The UN has called for ceasefires. And Lieutenant Governor Stratton, who wants us to believe she's a moral fighter who 'doesn't shy away from a fight,' has been silent.

"Silent when the killing started in October 2023. Silent when Chicago erupted in protest during the DNC. Silent through 15 months of genocide. Silent even now with ceasefire agreements and UN resolutions.

"Why? Because her boss, Governor JB Pritzker, served on the board of AIPAC. Because Pritzker has supported groups like Friends of the IDF, an organization that raises tens of millions of dollars a year to support Israeli soldiers. Because calling out genocide would cost her the billionaire backing that makes her 'inevitable.'



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"You cannot claim to be a progressive fighter for justice while staying silent about genocide because it's politically inconvenient. You cannot co-opt movements for abolition and liberation while refusing to speak when children are being slaughtered with American weapons. You cannot position yourself as the moral alternative while lacking the courage to challenge the billionaire who elevated you.

"This is the difference between leadership and opportunism. Between conviction and calculation. Between having principles and having a positioning strategy.

"When asked last night to name a distinguishing policy position, Lieutenant Governor Stratton couldn't do it. She talked about campaign finance reform, which all three candidates support. Because she doesn't have a vision. Her own campaign messaging admits this: 'Tell me what to fight for.'

"Folks drowning in debt don't have time to teach you what policies you need to fight for. People choosing between insulin and rent don't need a seminar convener asking about priorities. Communities getting raided by ICE don't need someone who discovers abolition when it's polling well.

"They need someone who already knows what justice looks like. Someone whose principles come from somewhere deeper than focus groups. Someone willing to pay costs for speaking truth.



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“The establishment’s time is up. Illinois deserves better than billionaire-backed progressive cosplay. Illinois deserves someone who will DEMAND MORE, not wait to be told what’s popular.

“Here’s what that looks like: A mother takes her child to the doctor without checking her bank account. A father working \$25 an hour comes home instead of rushing to a second job. Young people buy homes because we built enough housing. A child walks into school with a full stomach. Families live without fear of ICE raids.

“The debate last night showed three establishment politicians managing decline. None offered a vision for the future. None challenged the systems that created this crisis. Not one had the courage to say: our government is funding genocide, and we must stop it.

“That’s not leadership. That’s cowardice dressed up in progressive aesthetics.

“These aren’t proposals. They’re overdue payments. And when we deliver them, we don’t just change policy. We change what’s possible.

“That’s why I’m running. Join us.”

**About Christopher Swann:** *Christopher Swann is a Senior Program Manager at Feeding America, deacon at New Progressive Missionary Baptist Church, and candidate for U.S. Senate.*

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