

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Ralph Martire

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Illinois Statecraft Oral History project

Interview # ISC-A-L-2015-049

Ralph Martire, Executive Director for the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft- Pension Crisis in Illinois* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: Nov. 12, 2015 Location: Martire's office in Chicago, Illinois

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL Volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:20 / 1.33 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on January 26, 2016.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Ralph Martire, *Illinois Statecraft-Pension Crisis*, ISC-A-L-2015-049

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Ralph Martire was born on July 25, 1959 in Bridgeport, Connecticut. He earned a BA in History from Indiana University in 1982, and a JD from the University of Michigan in 1985. Following graduation, Martire worked from 1986-2004 with three Chicago law firms. His area of focus was on intellectual property, corporate transactions, asset-based lending, technology patents, and as general counsel. In 1999 he became the Executive Director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, a 501(c) (3) think tank whose stated mission is to ensure “state, federal, and local workforce, education, fiscal, economic, and budget policies are fair, just, and promote opportunity for all.” Martire also currently serves as Vice-President for the River Forest District 90 and is a member of the executive board of the West Cook Division of the Illinois Association of School Boards. From 2011-2013, he was a full voting commissioner to the congressionally established “Equity and Excellence in Education Commission.” This work led to the report “For Each and Every Child” in February, 2013. He also serves as a technical advisor to the House Appropriations Committee on Education Policy. In addition, Martire writes articles for statewide newspapers include the *Springfield State Journal Register* and the Suburban Chicago *Daily Herald*, and teaches classes at Illinois State University, Roosevelt University, and Benedictine University. Mr. Martire is a frequent guest on television talk shows discussing public policy.

This interview explores the issue of pension under-funding and how it developed over the years. Also discussed were the role that several changes played in the state’s severe pension shortfall, including the Edgar Pension Ramp, various early retirement legislations, pension holidays and bond sales, the temporary income tax, Tier 2, and the passage (2013) and later unconstitutional ruling (2015) on Senate Bill 1. Martire talks in detail about the causes of pension underfunding, and potential solutions to the problem.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Center for Tax and Budget Accountability; Tier 2 pensions in Illinois; causes of Illinois’s pension underfunding; solutions for Illinois’s pension underfunding; Senate Bill 1 (2013) on pension reform; IL Supreme Court’s ruling on SB-1 as being unconstitutional; pension impacts on local school districts; Gov. Jim Edgar on pensions; Gov. George Ryan on pensions; Gov. Rod Blagojevich on pensions; Gov. Pat Quinn on pensions; Gov. Bruce Rauner on pensions.

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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