

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with John Cullerton

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Illinois Statecraft-Pension Crisis Oral History project

Interview # ISP-A-L-2021-005

Senator John Cullerton, who discusses the many legislative efforts to address Illinois's pension problem during his years as Senate President, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Illinois Statecraft – Pension Crisis* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: February 24, 2021 Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library,
Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:04 / 1.07 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on May 11, 2021.

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

Transcript being
processed

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Abstract

John Cullerton, *Illinois Statecraft-Pensions*, ISP-A-L-2021-005

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: John Cullerton was born on October 28, 1948 in Chicago, Illinois. He served in the Illinois House of Representatives as a Democrat representing the northern lakefront area of Chicago from January 1978 through the end of 1990, then in the Illinois Senate until his retirement in January 2020. From January 2009 through the end of 2019 he was the Senate President. Senator Cullerton talked extensively about his life and political career in a separate interview, part of the *Illinois Statecraft – Legislators* collection.

During this interview, Senator Cullerton gave a detailed discussion of the efforts he and the Illinois Senate made to reform the struggling Illinois pension system. He explained the 1995 reform that came to be known as the Edgar ramp. He especially discussed the importance of creating a Tier 2 pension system which he stressed that, over time, will solve the state's problems once those in the Tier 1 (Legacy) system are no longer drawing benefits. He also discussed the various strategies he and his Senate colleagues made to push for what they considered a constitutional change for Tier 1 employees, and the competing legislation that Illinois House members and others were supporting, which he characterized as being unconstitutional. Ultimately, what was pushed through was a bill that subsequently was determined in a unanimous decision to be unconstitutional by the Illinois Supreme Court.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Illinois pension system; attempts for pension reform in Illinois; Eric Madier; Laurence Msall; Speaker Mike Madigan; Gov. Pat Quinn; Illinois

Notes 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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