

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Allen Grosboll

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

Interview # ISC-A-L-2019-044

Allen (Al) Grosboll, an executive assistant to Governor Jim Edgar, 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: Aug 1, 2019 Location: Abraham Lincoln Pres. Library, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Transcript
being processed

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 0:57 / 0.95 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on August 28, 2019.

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

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Abstract

Allen Grosboll, *Pension Crisis in Illinois*, ISC-A-L-2019-044

Biographical Information/Overview of Interview: Allen ‘Al’ Grosboll was born in May 1951 in Springfield, Illinois, and grew up in nearby Petersburg, Illinois. Following his graduation from Eastern Illinois University he worked as an Illinois Legislative Intern, specifically with House Republicans. When Jim Edgar was Secretary of State in the early 1980s Grosboll was the Director of Motor Vehicles, becoming the Deputy Secretary of State in 1984. When Edgar became governor in January 1991, Grosboll became one of several executive assistants in the Edgar administration. In that capacity, he monitored several government agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, the Pollution Control Board, the Department of Energy and Natural Resources, Historic Preservation and others.

During this interview, Allen discusses the Edgar administration’s response to the growing pension problem in Illinois. Rather than let the problem continue to build as had been the case in previous administrations, Governor Edgar acted in 1994 to fix the problem in the long term. After negotiating with the Democratically controlled House and the Republican leadership in the Senate, they jointly developed a plan where payments would be mandated by law to be paid each year into the state’s five pension systems, with the amount of payments increasing in each succeeding year. After forty-five years, the pension systems would be funded at ninety-five percent. The plan became known as the ramp, and by the 2010s, many were calling it the ‘Edgar Ramp,’ often using the term in a derogatory way. Grosboll stressed that in 1994 Edgar recognized the problem and took action to start a fix, believing that the plan would need to be tweaked in the future. Edgar realized that doing nothing was not an option, and Grosboll commends him for starting the process to fix the state’s pension crisis. Grosboll also pointed out the serious damage that the Blagojevich administration did to the pension system when he 1) borrowed ten billion dollars to put against the pensions and 2) suspended payments for a couple of years to spend state funds on more politically popular programs.

Subject Headings/Key Words: Governor Jim Edgar; Illinois pension crisis; ‘Edgar’ pension ramp; Governor Jim Thompson; Governor Rod Blagojevich; David McKinney; Speaker of the Illinois House Mike Madigan; Governor George Ryan;

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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