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An Interview with Senator Daniel Biss

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

Interview # ISC-A-L-2015-044

Daniel Biss, State Senator for the 9th District, 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:

September 28, 2015 Location: Cullerton's Office, Bilandic Building

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: _____

Edited by: _____

Total Pages: _____ Total Time: 1:02 / 1.03 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on December 16, 2015.

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

Transcript
being processed

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Abstract

Senator Daniel Biss, Illinois Statecraft, ISC-A-L-2015-044

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Daniel Biss was born in August, 1977 in Akron, Ohio. He graduated from high school in Bloomington, Indiana in 1995, and earned a BA from Harvard University in Mathematics in 1998. He earned a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 2002. Daniel taught mathematics at the University of Chicago from 2002 to 2008. In 2008, he ran as a Democrat for the Illinois General Assembly. Although unsuccessful at that time, he was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives in 2010. Shortly thereafter, a colleague retired, and he ran for the state Senate. He was elected and has served in that capacity through the present. At the time of the interview, Senator Biss served on the Education, Human Services, Revenue Oversight, Financial Institutions, and Pension Committees. Senator Biss was on the bipartisan committee that in 2013 passed Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) dealing with state pension reform.

This interview details the legislative activity starting in 2011 attempting to reform the five state pension systems. Senator Biss discusses pension legislation such as SB 512, HB 6258, SB 2404 and SB 1 (Public Act 98-0599). He reviews how the legislation that resulted in SB 1 was developed, and the different approaches that were taken by the Illinois House and Senate. As a Pension Committee member, Senator Biss reviewed the activities that took place prior his arrival in the General Assembly, including Governor Jim Edgar's pension reform legislation in 1995, Governor Blagojevich's pension holidays, various bond sales, the role of the temporary income tax of 2010, and the creation of a Tier 2 employee system. Sen. Biss also discusses the recent Illinois Supreme Court Cases that invalidated many of SB 1's reforms. Senator Biss concludes the interview by examining possible legislative actions in the future.

Subject Headings/Key Words: pension crisis in Illinois; Illinois Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), 2013 (pension reform); 1995 pension ramp legislation during Gov. Edgar administration; IL Supreme Court decision declaring SB 1 unconstitutional; Illinois bipartisan Pension Committee; Illinois's Commission on Government Accountability and Financing; Governor Rod Blagojevich; Governor Jim Edgar

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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