

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Shawn Healy, PhD

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Education is Key – Civics Education in IL* Oral History project

Interview # ECE-A-L-2019-023

Shawn Healy, Civics Education advocate who helped craft IL House Bill 4025 which mandated civics education in high schools, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Education is Key – Civics Education in Illinois* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: May 9, 2019    Location: Chicago, Illinois at the McCormick Foundation

Interview Format: Digital audio

Interviewer: Philip Pogue, ALPL volunteer

Transcription by: \_\_\_\_\_

Edited by: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Pages: \_\_\_\_\_    Total Time: 1:29 / 1.48 hrs.

Interview being  
processed

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on October 29, 2019.

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

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## Abstract

### Shawn Healy, *Civics Education in Illinois*, ECE-A-L-2019-023

**Biographical Information/Overview of Interview:** Shawn Healy was born in West Allis, Wisconsin in May 1975, and graduated from New Berlin West High School (WI) in 1993. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Madison in 1997, where he majored in political science and history. Shawn worked at both of Sheboygan's high schools teaching U.S. history and government. He also coached football, basketball and track (1999-2001). Shawn then taught at West Chicago High School from 2001-2005, where he added Chicago history and economics to those subjects he taught. In 2005, Shawn joined the McCormick Foundation where he became involved with their Freedom Museum and Freedom Train. He also became the Foundation's Director of the Democracy School initiative. Healy is also an adjunct professor at the University of Illinois-Chicago where he teaches policy analysis, public leadership, and civic engagement. Shawn earned his Masters' and Ph.D. from the University of Illinois-Chicago in 2003 and 2014) His doctoral thesis was entitled "Essential School Supports for Civic Learning."

Healy became an advocate for requiring civics education for Illinois high school students, which became known as the 'BringCivicsBack' campaign. He served on the Civics Education Task Force to study and to make recommendations to the General Assembly. After passage of House Bill 4025 which Governor Rauner signed into law in August 2015, Shawn helped raise funds to promote the training of teaching staff over a three year period. He also helped revise Illinois' social studies standards. Shawn has served as President of the Illinois Council for Social Studies and was chair of the Illinois Civics Mission Coalition.

In this interview, Dr. Healy discusses HB 4025, which requires Illinois High Schools to teach a semester of civics to all students, beginning with the freshman class of 2016-2017. He reviews the 'BringCivicsBack' movement, the survey of schools on the teaching of civics, the Civics Education Task Force, and the trailer bill that required civics classes to begin in 2016-2017. The new law requires a semester of civics either as a stand alone course or incorporated into an existing course such as American Government, US History, or American Problems. The course must have content on government institutions, current and controversial issue discussions, a service learning component, and simulations of democratic processes. HB 4025 also requires that social studies teachers receive training related to civics education.

**Subject Headings/Key Words:** civics education in Illinois schools; House Bill 4025 signed in August 2015; 'BringBackCivics' movement; Illinois Democracy School; Chicago Public Schools Global Citizenship initiative; professional growth training fund; McCormick Foundation; teacher training on civics education

**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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